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EDITORIAL

SPECIAL MENNONITE COMMUNITY LIFE NUMBER

THE MENNONITE QUARTERLY REVIEW IS HAPPY TO BE ABLE TO PUBLISH IN THIS ISSUE the complete text of all the addresses delivered at the "Conference on Mennonite Community Life" held at Goshen College on March 16 and 17, 1945, sponsored by the Industrial Relations Committee of the Mennonite General Conference. A few of the addresses are brief and inspirational in character: the majority are carefully prepared scholarly papers. Together they constitute a body of thought of weight and significance and represent the first systematic attempt to deal with the entirety of a central problem in contemporary Mennonite life, namely the maintenance of strong Mennonite communities in the midst of the powerful modern secular American culture. The spirit and purpose of the conference is well set forth in the introductory remarks of G. F. Hershberger, the secretary of the sponsoring committee, which are printed preceding the papers under the title, "The Conference on Mennonite Community Life." The addresses should be interpreted in the light of the philosophy expounded in that statement.

From one point of view the theme of this conference might be thought of as purely sociological, almost secular, for many quite irreligious sociologists and social workers speak much about community building and related subjects with no reference to the Christian faith. Some might also view the conference as one in effect promoting a liberal "social gospel" concept, for many modern liberal churchmen speak of "Christianizing the community" with slight reference to the true Gospel and the Church. Careful examination of the contents of the conference addresses as published in this issue will quickly dispel such misconceptions. The people who are to constitute the communities under discussion are not the general populace, nor even the natural descendants of the Mennonites of the past. They are exclusively the professing members of the Mennonite Church and the body of Christ. The whole structure and functioning of the Mennonite community here treated are based upon the regenerate living of redeemed believers who have undertaken to follow the Lord Jesus Christ in all things. These are no secular communities, and their life and work are neither irreligious, neutral, nor liberal social gospel in character. Actually what is under discussion is the fullness of life of the Church of Jesus Christ in its corporate, every-day, earthy, but rich expression.

It is good that this conference was held if for no other reason than that it has placed emphasis upon Christian life as something which includes the whole of life and in which no area may be left outside of the concern and the ministry of the church and the gospel. This has been the historical Anabaptist-Mennonite conception. In more recent times influences from modern pietistic and fundamentalistic Protestantism have conspired to lead some Mennonites astray from this strongly Biblical position to a point where they have placed all emphasis upon the inward experience of salvation and have minimized decidedly the need for redeeming social, economic, and community relationships and activities. This trend needs to be halted; the lost ground must be recovered.

But there is another great value in this conference, namely, the emphasis upon the centrality of the religious fellowship of the body of believers for their total life, and the interdependence of directly religious and more secular activities. From this point of view the concept of the church as a true brotherhood recovers its vitality and the vision of a satisfyingly rich and sincere Christian life is vividly evoked.

The addresses at this conference by no means exhaust the subject, nor do they solve all the problems related to the life of the modern Mennonite community and Church. They do mark a milestone in current Mennonite thought. A great work is still to be done; the work is but begun. This beginning, however, is a testimony to the vitality and creative power of contemporary Mennonite leadership as it faces the modern world with its baffling and at times almost terrifying forces and testings.

The Mennonite Quarterly Review

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THE CONFERENCE ON MENNONITE COMMUNITY LIFE

GUY F. HERSHBERGER

Since the Conference on Mennonite Community Life is sponsored by the Committee on Industrial Relations of the Mennonite General Conference, it seems proper at the opening session to make some statement regarding the Committee itself and its work, as well as the purpose of the present meeting. The Committee on Industrial Relations was appointed by General Conference in 1939, the immediate occasion for its appointment being the problem of labor union membership which was then, and still is, facing numerous members of the Mennonite Church who work in factories, mines, and industries where the union has closed shop contracts.

It also happens that the present secretary of the Committee on Industrial Relations addressed the 1939 Mennonite General Conference on the subject "Nonresistance and Industrial Conflict." After analyzing the conflict between labor and capital, and showing its violation of the Christian principles of love and brotherhood, he suggested three possible ways in which the Church might proceed to meet the labor problem: 1. A continuation of the policy begun some years before of forming agreements with unions whereby nonresistant Christians are permitted to work in union controlled shops, without membership and participation in union activities. Many

unions are willing to grant this privilege on condition that the worker contribute, to some cause mutually agreed upon, a sum of money equivalent to the dues paid by the members. 2. The second suggestion was the establishment of Mennonite industries in which there would be a close co-operation between employers and employees, with all relations and practices based on New Testament principles, rather than on the principles and practices commonly followed by the capitalist-labor world of our time. The belief was expressed that Mennonites, with their tradition of brotherhood and New Testament ethics, should be able in their communities to develop industries and industrial practices which would be models of Christian practice and relations in industry. 3. The third suggestion was that Mennonite communities put forth co-operative efforts to keep the members of the brotherhood in as close touch as possible with rural Mennonite communities.

In its report to General Conference in 1941 the Committee on Industrial Relations referred to a survey made by D. A. Yoder in which he found that about 300 members from the congregations in northern Indiana were working in factories, and that about one-third of these were in factories controlled by unions. The report showed that the Committee had done considerable work in assisting these brethren with their needs, and that it was endeavoring to be alert to current industrial problems as they arose.

In this same report, however, the committee expressed a concern for what it called "the larger problem of social trends and the Mennonite community." It stated that the church should endeavor to examine, more closely than it has in the past, the roots of its problem, and do what it can to provide a more desirable social and economic situation, so that the economic and social ethics of the New Testament may be more fully realized among our people. The Committee urged the taking of "steps to develop a forward looking program of community building."

In 1943 the Committee on Industrial Relations was recognized as a standing committee of General Conference with a three-fold function, as follows: 1. "Indoctrination and education of the brotherhood in the teaching of the Scriptures and of the Church concerning economic, business, and industrial relationships, including the Christian attitude toward labor unions, investments, the choosing of occupations, etc." 2. "Assisting members of the Church confronted with

demands to unite with labor unions." 3. "Making community studies and reporting findings and conclusions."

The second of these functions has been carried on as the needs have presented themselves. So far practically nothing has been done on the third point, but this is a field which cannot wait much longer. There is much work here which urgently needs to be done. On the first point, that of teaching, a modest beginning has been made. At the present time the *Gospel Herald* publishes a monthly page under the heading, "Living our Faith." This page appears in the second issue of each month, and is sponsored by the Committee. The present Conference on Mennonite Community Life represents a further step in the Committee's teaching program.

For four centuries the Mennonite Church has been used of God in the performance of a great and sacred mission. Its emphasis on the authority of the Bible, on freedom of conscience, and on a way of life characterized by obedient discipleship, Christian brotherhood, and nonresistance, has been a source of blessing to the Christian Church, and has had an influence far beyond the membership of the Mennonite Church itself. We believe it is God's will that the Church should continue to serve Him in the future as she has in the past.

We believe, however, that the successful carrying out of this mission depends in a large measure on the strength of the local congregation, and on the quality of the Christian life found in our Mennonite communities. We are also aware that present day changes and trends in government, agriculture, business, and education, and in the social and religious life of our nation, are affecting the life of our congregations and communities in a very important way. If we have an understanding of these influences, and meet them intelligently, in the fear of the Lord, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it is possible that our present day "problems" will constitute our greatest opportunity to fulfill our mission, and that they will be a means for the strengthening of the Church. On the other hand, if present day influences and changes are not understood, and if the brotherhood, because of indifference, fails to meet the challenge which they present, they may overwhelm the church and render her powerless to fulfill the mission to which God has called her.

The Conference on Mennonite Community Life has been called for the purpose of thinking together on these conditions of our time, in order that we may understand more fully the task which lies

before us. This conference is not a meeting for the hearing of inspirational addresses, nor for the passing of resolutions. It is not a meeting where anyone in particular proposes to teach another. It is rather to be a study conference where all are learners. It is to be a meeting where ministers and laymen, farmers, businessmen, and teachers, with a concern for the future of the Church unite their hearts and minds to think carefully and seriously on the issues of the day, in order that their understanding may be deepened, their vision enlarged, and their convictions made more certain.

We are grateful for the presence of so many at the opening session of the conference. We have with us a representative group of Mennonite ministers and laymen, chiefly from Indiana, Illinois, and Ohio, but also a few from other states. There are representatives from Pennsylvania, Virginia, Michigan, Iowa, Missouri, and Kansas, and from the province of Ontario in Canada. It is my sincere hope that these may be days of rich and profitable fellowship. In the sessions following the first the plan will be to present the theme of the hour at some length. This presentation will then be followed by a period of discussion opened by persons designated in advance. These persons will have five minutes each in which to raise questions, to offer objections, or to make further suggestions on the theme of the session. Following this the subject will be open for general discussion. It is our desire that everyone present consider this his meeting, and we ask that each one be ready to participate in the discussions of the various sessions as he may feel led.

THE RELIGIOUS BASIS OF THE MENNONITE COMMUNITY

PAUL ERB

The farming communities of the various branches of the Mennonite Church, as they are found in the various parts of our country and of other countries, are among the best exemplars today of the functioning rural community. As such they have attracted the attention of many students of rural sociology. It is the purpose of this paper to examine the significance of the attachment of a religious denominational name to such a community.

The heart of every Mennonite community is its meeting house. Here the congregation gathers on Sunday morning, probably also on Sunday evening, and sometimes in a week-day meeting, for worship and religious instruction. There may be additional meetings for weddings and for funerals. Sometimes the sewing circle holds its monthly meeting in the church building. Evangelistic meetings and summer Bible school may put the church into daily use. To the various meetings of the church the entire congregation comes. The old people are there at least on Sunday morning. The children come, not just for Sunday school, but for the entire service. Oftentimes the older boys and girls at least will be sitting together, probably on the front bench of the church. All the mothers are there with their babies. One learns to go to church early if he is a Mennonite. The preacher expects the competition of crying babies and restless children. It would bother him far more if they weren't there. Regular attendance is the rule rather than the exception in most of our Mennonite churches. Very frequently the total attendance exceeds the membership of the church, because of the children and the frequent visitors.

The church services are a genuine community project. The minister or ministers have more than likely been ordained from among the membership of the congregation. They live with the people during the week, and to a considerable extent earn their living in the same way that the members do. They are financial counsellors as well as spiritual advisers. The Sunday school officers and sometimes the teachers have been elected by the popular vote of the congregation. There is no choir or specialized group to do the

singing, but the entire congregation joins in heartily. All important decisions concerning the life and activities of the church, are decided in a church counsel meeting. Members are given the feeling that they are very much a part of the church. As they sing and talk and pray together they have a sense of oneness in faith and life.

But the meetings at the church are not only for purposes of worship. Here the members of the church meet one another. It is a common practice for everyone to shake hands as far around as time and opportunity permit. Oftentimes the handshake is accompanied by the kiss of love, and thus the social fellowship is elevated to the dignity of a church ordinance. Early arrivals stand around outside the church to visit if the weather permits. If not, they may visit in the ante-rooms or even in the pews of the church. One comes to church to worship, certainly, but isn't it good religion, too, to be friendly? It must be admitted that it is not an uncommon practice for some of this friendly visiting to continue into or even entirely through a church service. And when the benediction is pronounced the aisles and entrance ways may be clogged for thirty minutes or more as friends greet friends, discuss affairs, religious or social, and try to complete arrangements as to who will eat dinner with whom. Sunday afternoons are frequently spent in visiting together, family with family. Every good Mennonite home feels that the other folks of the congregation should be entertained there at least once every year or two.

The social life of the young people is pretty much confined to the congregational group. They have their non-Mennonite neighbors, of course, with whom they have friendly contacts. They go to school and make friends there. But the basic social life of the community is pretty well confined within denominational boundaries. When the young people have a singing or a social, it is the church group who are expected to be there. Wives and husbands are chosen, for the most part, from the member families, so that in some of our older and more self-contained communities, people may find themselves more or less closely related to seventy-five per cent of the congregation.

Members of the church, most of whom are farmers, co-operate in their work. They help one another in threshing and corn picking, in butchering and in barn raising. The women help each other with their artistic patch-work quilts and perhaps in drying corn and

canning fruit. When someone moves, the work entailed is a neighborhood affair. In case of a death in the home, household responsibilities are promptly taken over by sympathizing sisters who preside until after the funeral. Various forms of mutual aid are common. Losses by fire, storm, or theft may be shared by the more fortunate ones. Sometimes, of course, this mutual aid is systematized through a mutual aid organization.

In these and many other details which could be mentioned, it is apparent that there is a genuine community interest. It is clear, too, that there is a definite connection between the secular and the religious phases of life. The religion, moreover, is not peripheral, but is central and basic to the whole structure. The community we have described is a Mennonite community, and the true connotation of the term Mennonite as applied to it is a religious one. This is not to claim, of course, that the various expressions of religion are perfect or in every way ideal. But it is to say that the members of this community could not think of their community as having any other unifying principle than their common religious faith and practice.

It is probably true that most of the strong rural communities of the country have a religious character similar to that we have described. There is a rapidly developing rural life movement in the Catholic Church and there are many strong Catholic rural communities. Lutherans, Reformed, Brethren, Quakers, and other churches also have many instances of strong rural communities. Of the numerous communistic brotherhoods which have at various times existed in our country, only the religious communities such as the Hutterites have what it seems to take to carry these communistic endeavors over a long period of years. Communities which spring up on the basis of some economic or social theory lack the essential cement which it seems religion is able to furnish. Let us think why this is true.

The antithesis of the community is the individual. When men do not work together, they work by and for themselves. We have all seen the working out in our society of rugged individualism, in which each man fights for his own interests. Such individualism often strangely succeeds and one man is able to dominate the lives of many others. Great fortunes are concentrated in the hands of a few, and these few, the capitalists, enlist the rest of the population in a sort of a slave economy. Now such a social order, whatever its

elements of strength, is not Christian. Nor can it achieve a full, happy community life. At the basis of community living is altruism, in which each man serves the others. The Scripture command is that we should look not every man on his own things but rather on the things of others. The un-Christian individualist says, "How can I advance my own affairs?" The Christian altruist says, "How can I help my brother to succeed?" Altruism sometimes springs up in unexpected places. But fundamentally and permanently any altruistic attitude must have a Christian base. As John Macmurray has said in a recent pamphlet entitled, *Through Chaos to Community,* "Only religion has the power to produce and sustain in us that structure of emotional motive, and therefore that system of habitual action in the daily round of the common life, that alone can make social life possible and can keep it unified and harmonious . . . the common system of habit for a world community remains to be created, and religion is the instrument for its creation." The spirit of selfishness is so strong in unregenerate men that sooner or later a community that is not dominated by Christian motives will break up on the rocks of that selfishness. Only the man with Christian love in his heart can effectively, in honor and in welfare, prefer another.

Ethical conduct must prevail wherever men are to live happily together. There are, of course, ethical relationships between a man and his God. But six out of the ten commandments deal with human relationships, and religion is the only effective basis for human ethics. Religion relates men ethically because they have been related spiritually. The man who is my brother I must love and treat as if I love him. Luigi G. Ligutti, a Catholic leader who has done considerable in the development of Catholic rural communities, says: "In the Christian life ethical relationships are *de facto* inseparable from man's supernatural destiny and his status as a member of the mystical body of Christ. Our participation in the Christ life through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit implies a duty of mutual charity which can only receive its full expression, in the economic field, through many forms of genuine co-operation for the common good, and the curbing of self and private advantage."[1] Ligutti also quotes the following from Pope Pius XI: "The union of hearts and minds through charity binding men together, is the main principle of stability in all institutions, no matter how perfect they may seem, which

[1] Ligutti and Rawe, *Rural Roads to Security* (Milwaukee, 1940), p. 265.

aim at establishing social peace and promoting mutual aid. In its absence, as repeated experience proves, the wisest regulations come to nothing. Then only will it be possible to unite all in harmonious striving for the common good, when all sections of society have the intimate convictions that they are members of a single family and children of the same Heavenly Father, and further, that they are one body in Christ and everyone members of another."[2] For Mennonites as well as for Catholics it is true that the relationship which men bear to each other in Christ has direct implications and powerful motivations for their relationships to each other. It is doubtful if anything other than a man's religion can impel him to become and to remain at all times an effective member of a community which must live and work together in peace and common endeavor.

Since religion is relatively stable and unchanging, a religious community is not at the mercy of ephemeral human associations. One sees, for example, a group of people who are given an intense community spirit through some temporary circumstance. A group of marooned shipwrecked men will work together with effective amity because of their common danger. But when rescue appears, the community probably falls apart. There are people who have been pretty much a unit to themselves because they spoke a language which their neighbors did not speak. This linguistic peculiarity gave them a community sense. But within another generation their children, attending English schools, will mingle freely with all their neighbors, and the language community will be gone. Religious truth is eternal. Interpretations and applications of that truth, if not eternal, are at least very slow in changing. The church, born under the Roman empire, survived the disintegration of that empire and the darkness of the Middle Ages. It survived the feudal system and the rise of modern nationalism. It has lived through the industrial era and its continuance does not depend upon the maintenance of capitalism or the rise of a new socialistic order. True religion, that is, is not of the times, but of the ages, and is the firmest possible foundation for the building of a permanent community.

If people are to live together successfully and without misunderstandings and conflicts, they must have a certain approximation of ethical and moral equality. That is, there must be in a community sufficient agreement as to what is right and wrong to pre-

2 *Ibid.*, p. 266.

vent the incrimination and charges which arise when some people do what other people condemn. It is only a common religion which can furnish those moral and ethical sanctions which will give to a people a common denominator of conduct. When people hear the same sermon in church and the same discussions in Sunday-schools and other meetings; when they are subject to the same church discipline and have a similar up-bringing at home, they are not likely to be far apart in what they consider right and wrong. This approximation of unanimity of ethical opinion makes possible a genuine community life.

Religion also may furnish those principles of differentiation which set off the community from its surrounding population. This principle would be especially applicable among Mennonites, who take their religion seriously enough to believe that Christians are different from and should be separate from those who are not Christians. On the basis of Biblical teachings and arguments Mennonites choose a course of life which in many respects, such for instance as in dress and in amusements, set up certain barriers between them and others who do not apply their Christianity in the same way. It is obvious that such a philosophy of separation constitutes a powerful incentive to perpetuate the community, in order to maintain within it the purity of life which, it is felt, the Bible teaches. A certain amount of isolationism is necessary if the community is to continue to exist. Unless there is a containing circumference, the body tends to become diffused and thinned.

Religious disintegration or secularization, as it has been recently called, is the beginning of community disintegration. If we lose our common faith and common practice, our communal life is in a precarious condition. A certain Mennonite community developed a theological debate. About one half the congregation took each of the two sides of the question. All efforts at understanding failed and the church split. The seceding element built another meeting house near the old one. The people continued to live in the same homes and of course had frequent contacts in school and business, but their religious unity was gone. They did not worship together, and each group thought of the other as heretical in doctrine. The strong community spirit which had prevailed could not survive this blow. Gradually the two groups drew more and more apart until today they have almost nothing in common. Only in death do they

use the same cemetery. The effects of this community break-up have been sad, indeed. It has, in fact, been an almost fatal blow to the community life of the neighborhood. It is a clear example of the fact that community of interest in farming, business, education, or anything else cannot take the place of community of faith. Any element, therefore, which works for religious disintegration is the enemy of the community. When Mennonites are tempted to schism and division, they ought to think seriously of the community effects of such steps.

One of the precious heritages of the Mennonite Church is the tradition and the practice of community living. The Mennonite faith and the Mennonite way of life belong together. If one suffers, we may be sure the other will suffer also. If we wish, therefore, to maintain strong communities in the future as we have in the past, we must look well to the religious foundations. If our church and community leaders have a genuine awareness of the problem and will make the effort and the sacrifice which is required to maintain against every obstacle a strong church life, then we have reason to hope and believe that Mennonite communities will continue to be a salt in the earth and a glory to God.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CONGREGATIONAL BASE IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

HARRY A. DIENER

"Upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matt. 16:18). "Even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it . . . that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. 5:25, 27).

The church is the most important organization on earth. It is the body of Christ. It is the light of the world, the salt of the earth. The church is commissioned to carry the Gospel into all the world, and to every creature. Its great task is to nurture and to develop the believer, and to send him out as an emissary of the King. It is the church that God purposes to save out of this world, that He may take it unto Himself in glory, there to enjoy the blessings of heaven throughout eternity. The Devil, through sin, has so sadly perverted the world with all that is in it that God expects to salvage the church, as a glorious group, out of the moral wreckage upon the earth.

Soon after the death of Christ a group of His followers met together, because of common fear, and to strengthen themselves through fellowship and prayer. The Lord sent to this group the blessing and power of the Holy Spirit, and they began at once to witness boldly to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The disciples of Christ increased in numbers, in service, and in influence. They met frequently for fellowship, for prayer, and for the breaking of bread. This body of believers soon became so large that they needed more helpers; then the deacons were chosen. Soon the witness of this group was so strong that its enemies arose against it in severe persecution which resulted in scattering the group; and then there were many groups in many places. There were prophets and teachers among them. They were concerned that the Gospel should be carried to other cities. Collectively they sent relief to places where there was need. Out of this development came the congregational pattern as we have it today, with churches at Antioch, Corinth, Rome, and many other places.

In the program of the church of our day we have many institutions: foreign, city, and rural missions; parochial schools, academies, colleges, and Bible schools; children's homes, old people's homes, and hospitals; a publishing house and book stores. All of these institutions have their place and service. We have reasons to praise the Lord for the way He has called and led His servants to places of need where they have opportunity to preach the Word to those who have never heard the message of Christ and His power to save. We rejoice for the souls who have been rescued from the depth of sin, and who now have a glorious hope for the future. We shall not here attempt to rehearse the good that has been accomplished by these institutions of the church, but we would like to have you notice that in much of our church work we give publicity to these interests of the church to such an extent that the work of the local congregation receives little attention. Is there not even a tendency within the ministry to feel that unless one is serving the Lord and the church in one of its institutions, his place is of little importance?

Our subject today is "The Importance of the congregational base in the life of the church." The church looks to the congregation for two very important things: its resources and its standards.

The greatest resource of the church is its Spirit-filled, Spirit-led, and Spirit-empowered saints. It has usually been the plan of the Lord for a human messenger to deliver His message to individuals or to nations. He sent Jonah to Nineveh and Elijah to Ahab and to Israel. Out of the community of Bethlehem He called the great King David. From a home in Egypt He provided the great leader and law giver, Moses. In the New Testament we have similar illustrations. From the congregation at Jerusalem there came a number of useful men. The deacon Philip was used as an evangelist in Samaria, as a personal worker in the desert, and as a missionary in Caesarea, where his daughters were noble examples in life and witness. Stephen, although his earthly life was shortened, is a wonderful example of faithful witness and courageous dying. Timothy, the close friend and faithful companion of the Apostle Paul came from a congregation in Asia. Most of the men and women whom the Lord is using through the church to carry forward His work today have come from congregations where faithful parents, patient teachers, and diligent ministers have taught them, and where early in life they were led to give their service to the Lord.

As long as we remain in this world we have to do with earthly, material things. We usually think of them in terms of money. We are so accustomed to securing the necessities of life with money that we think and speak in those terms. Whenever any program of the church feels its need of money it goes to the congregations to present this need. When we examine the reports of our boards, commissions, and committees we are impressed with the many faithful contributors, some large, others smaller, who have provided the necessary material provisions to promote the work of the church.

The Mennonite Church has many able, faithful congregational leaders and workers who quietly give their time and energy to the building of strong congregations, which can supply the workers and the means without which the institutions of the church could not prosper. These congregations, by the grace of God, not only sustain themselves; it is they who provide the resources for the larger program of the church.

It is also to the congregations that the church must look for the maintenance of its standards. The time when "each man did that which was right in his own eyes" was in the distant past. It is true that each man must give an account of himself to God, but it is through the united efforts of the congregation that the church is enabled to uphold its standards of unity and purity. One of the chief concerns of Christ in His prayer for His followers was "that they may be one." In clearness He taught that the individual who would not hear the church should be considered as an heathen man and a publican. The early church came together to consider its standards of Christian expression. In their messages to the churches, Paul and Peter enunciated principles that should govern the congregational life of the church. The church is concerned with such matters as organization, the ordinances, the home, the relation of the Christian to the state and to the world. It is concerned with Christian principles of attire, the use of money, and many similar matters. In the last book of the Bible, "The Revelation," the Lord directs the Apostle John to write to the seven churches in rebuke and correction. Today the world needs to have the Christian standard of living faithfully lived and taught. Can anyone hold a light in such darkness? Can anyone point the way to peace in such trouble? Has anyone hope to give in such distress? Certainly there is only one group who can do so, and that is the church.

In conclusion, as congregations we have no reason to be proud of the position we hold in the program of the church; neither have we accomplished anything of which to be proud. But we have many reasons to be thankful unto God for counting us worthy to have intrusted into our homes and congregations, lives to be molded, directed, and developed in a way that He can use them as faithful witnesses of Jesus Christ, and able defenders of the Gospel of peace.

May God give every pastor an abundant portion of the Holy Spirit, that he may be enabled to see clearly his opportunities and to perform his duties in a manner that is pleasing unto Him.

THE MENNONITE CONCEPTION OF THE CHURCH AND ITS RELATION TO COMMUNITY BUILDING

HAROLD S. BENDER

In the sense in which we Mennonites understand the meaning of the words "Church" and "Christian" we might well substitute "church" for "community" in the title of our conference on "Mennonite Community Life." For have we not historically, and in our highest thought, always held that to be "Christian" means to follow Christ in *all* our ways including what the world calls "secular," and that the "church" is a brotherhood of love in which all the members minister to each other in all their needs *both* temporal and spiritual? And what more is a Christian community than a fellowship of disciples of Christ sharing a common faith, and under a common Lord helping one another achieve the fullness of abundant life which the Saviour came to bring? Nevertheless, inasmuch as our traditional thought of the church commonly concerns itself more directly with the preaching of the gospel and the provision of a ministry of worship and spiritual edification, whereas our traditional thought of community directs itself more to those interests and activities which are not primarily or narrowly religious such as economic, social and cultural, it may be well to retain the distinction of the two terms.

In agreeing to such a distinction, however, may I voice the devout hope that our discussions in this conference may help us to eliminate from our minds the dangerously unscriptural and un-Mennonite duality by which we so often draw a line between sacred and secular, between church and community. In drawing such a line we fall under the influence of three erroneous types of thought—Roman Catholic, popular Protestant, and plain worldly. Since the early Middle Ages Catholicism has taught that only that way of life is sacred which devotes itself wholly to narrowly religious duties and forsakes the common life of man; thus, those persons are sacred who enter the celibate life of the clergy or of the monkish orders, and those things only are sacred which are used in the ritual of worship; the common life of man, in home and family, in vocation and culture, is secular and of a lower order. Popular Protestantism from a different point of view has sanctified only certain limited areas of life, particularly the inward experience of salvation and fellowship with

Christ, and has abandoned large areas of the common life to compromise with the prevailing un-Christian world order on the specious plea that they cannot be Christianized in a world such as we live in. Out of this popular Protestant point of view has come the strange doctrine which some among us have not altogether escaped, that such great Biblical teachings as sanctification and holiness refer rather to states of mind than to achievements of living in obedience to Christ. Our modern pagan world, from again another point of view, has also been all too glad to confine religion to the formal aspects of worship chiefly inside of church buildings, and claim the rest of life for its secular self. What has religion to do with philosophy, science, politics, government, social service work, literature, art, etc., we are admonished.

For five hundred years our western civilization has increasingly made good this claim and under the leadership of an increasingly irreligious upper class has wrested area after area of the common life from the control of the Christian church and its dominant influence. It has so secularized our world that millions of men and women now get along from birth to death without ever touching religion or the church in any aspect of their life—marriage, birth, death, education, health, money, recreation, literature, art, occupation. Thus the whole of life has become devoid of any sense of divine calling or claim, or any awareness of eternal values and destiny. From this tragic secularization we are reaping a dreadful harvest and shall reap even worse. Some of us, in our haste to protect the church from contaminating itself by contact with this modern world of unbelief, and from losing its supreme mission, that of bringing Christ to a lost world, have fallen into the trap of this modern secularism by too hastily condemning as "social gospel" or "social service" the extension of Christian witness and service into unoccupied needy areas of the common life, forgetting that in denying the Christian Church the right of entrance into these fields we are actually consigning much of life to condemnation as secular, as not intended for Christian occupation. Such hasty name-calling should be classed as aid and comfort to the enemy of souls who must be only too happy to have Christians concentrate on their inner life and leave the real life of daily duty and experience to the domination of our contemporary pagan culture. To be sure, all of these so-called secular activities and vocations such as education, hospital

and medical service, relief work, cooperatives, special work, can be wholly secularized, and they usually are in our modern world, without any thought of Christian calling or witness to the Gospel. But they can also be conducted to the glory of God and the extension of His Kingdom, the saving of souls and the upbuilding of the Church. Whether these things are sacred or secular does not lie objectively in the activities; it lies in the spirit, purpose, and character of the actor, the man or woman in the work. Think, for instance, of how such Mennonite hospitals as those at LaJunta and Newton have been made thoroughly Christian institutions in spite of the fact that many hospitals are purely secular. To the early Anabaptists and Mennonites, none of these areas of activity that were at all possible for the Christian were counted secular; all were sacred, to be done as to the Lord.

Let us then not be modernized after the fashion of the Catholic, popular Protestant, or pagan worldly man; let us hold fast to our Scriptural and historic heritage on this point. What we cannot make sacred we have no business doing at all. If we cannot build Christian communities we have no business being a part of any community. Business is not business, it is life, and life must be Christian. If business cannot be Christianized then let the Christian get out of it. In either case, whether Christianizing a particular area of life, or getting the Christian out of it, the Church, according to the Mennonite conception, is mightily concerned, and must furnish vision, guidance, assistance, and if need be, control.

But, it may be asked, what bearing has this on our theme. Just, this: we cannot assess the bearing of our conception of the church on present needs, unless we first know what basic conception of Christianity lies behind it. If Christianity to us means primarily an inner experience, and flight from the work-a-day realities of life into a dream world of emotionalized religious forms and sentiment, then the church will probably turn out to be for us primarily a resource agency for the promotion of individual "piety." We will "go to church" on Sunday or on prayer meeting night, and cultivate the garden of God within our individual souls while the garden of our daily life will be cultivated with different machinery, with the help of the state, cultural associations, community organizations, even corporations, etc., or allowed to grow up in weeds. Then there will be no Christian community, and such a conference as this will be a

waste of time and money. Since, however, the Mennonite rejects this view of Christianity, and holds that to be Christian means to bring the whole of life under the obedience of Christ, even every thought into captivity to Him, then the church, which is the fellowship of disciples, will be the chief means by which he will cultivate the garden of his outward daily life as well as the inward garden of his soul.

May we now consider the cardinal elements in the Mennonite conception of the Church. They are eight, and each one of them has a bearing on our present-day needs, and on community building. (There are other aspects of the church and its work, of course, which are not noted here.)

1. *The Concept of the Church as the Body of Christ.* This is drawn directly from such New Testament passages as Romans 12, I Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4. All the members of the church together constitute a life unity of which Christ is the directing and controlling head, and are therefore under His authority; how can then any member of Christ live any part of his life outside of His control? If we are members of His Body, does only our heart belong to Him, while our hands and feet or our head may be left out in the world? At the same time, the members of His body are all members one of another; they share a common life and work; they have obligations to one another. The New Testament does not say that they are members of one another only on Sunday, or at prayer meeting, or at the communion table and the feet-washing tub. This body of Christ is always a body, always continuously functioning as a unit. Here is the primary basis for Christian community. How can we dissolve the body of Christ at the close of the benediction on Sunday morning and live the remaining days of the week as though each lives unto himself separately? Or are we after all only a collection of individuals, each worshipping God in his own heart and looking after the salvation of his own soul only?

This historic concept is well expressed by the refusal of our Swiss, German and Dutch forefathers to use the term "church" or "Kirche" in referring to the brotherhood, insisting on the term "Gemeinde," the term used in the German Bible. "Kirche" they used to refer to the great state churches whether Protestant or Catholic. "Gemeinde" (there is no good English equivalent) was the proper name for the body of Christ, the fellowship of true believers. As

long as the German language was used among us in America this practice was continued. Only with the adoption of the English have we come to speak of ourselves as a church. The German Bible, in fact, never uses the word "Kirche" to apply to the Body of Christ, but always "Gemeinde." The force of "Gemeinde" is exactly that of body or community, a group of people who share a common life. Have we unconsciously adopted another unscriptural and un-Mennonite concept of the church as we have taken over the English name?

2. *The Concept of the Church as the Temple of God.* This concept is drawn from Ephesians 2:22 where the church is called an habitation of God through the Spirit; and from I Corinthians 3 where Paul says: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." The defiling of the temple of God of which Paul here speaks is the divisive, schismatic spirit which was so evident at Corinth. The realization that the entire Church, not only the individual member, is the dwelling place of God, is to curb strife and schism and conserve the unity of the church. The presence of God in the church hallows the fellowship of believers, reminds them of their holy calling, rekindles the fires of flickering love, and knits hearts together in the bonds of peace. Only the church can have this sense of the presence of God; no secular organization can call on this resource to meet the constant threat of organizational breakdown or divisive factionalism. What community does not need help to meet the strains and stresses which accompany every attempt of frail human personalities to build a common life in cooperative endeavor! But what community can have the help of God like the Christian church! When our 1944 General Conference was in a period of strain and tension, and some of the seams threatened to open, it was coming humbly into the presence of God, whose temple and dwelling place we were, that brought us the victory and prevented the temple from being defiled. This concept means much to true community building.

3. *The Concept of the Church as a Brotherhood.* "Brother" and "Sister" are scriptural designations for members of the church which have become conventional with us and have largely lost their meaning. But in the New Testament they have a powerful force.

They indicate that the members of the church are so closely bound together by ties of love and mutual concern that they think of and act toward each other as members of a great family of whom God is the father and Christ the Elder Brother. They also suggest that in the church there are no classes, no clergy and laity, no artificial distinctions, but a fellowship of equals. When "Reverend," "Doctor," "Bishop," "Professor," or any other such forms replace the simple brother and sister greeting among us in the church, we shall be well on the way to losing this concept of the church as a brotherhood and its powerful motivation for Christian community life. The great state churches and denominations of ancient and modern times were not and are not brotherhoods but great institutional machines operated by and controlled by a professional class of clergy, theologians and administrators, who do many things *"for"* the members, but in which the vast mass of the membership have little share in the government, activity, life, and service of the church and in which there is accordingly no true common life. In such an ecclesiastical machine the sense of brotherhood perishes, the desire for community vanishes, and the very basis for effective community building disappears. There is even a sense in which the resistance of the Mennonite church of times past to the designation of its ministers as "pastors" was a healthy sign; active healthy members of the church do not need pastors, they need leaders, and servants. "One is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." When true Christian brotherhood exists, then all the resources of every member will be enlisted for the common work of the church and to meet the several needs of all. This is community.

4. *The Concept of the Church as a Body Separated from the World.* The New Testament plainly teaches that the disciple of Christ is in the world but not of it, that he can have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, that he cannot be yoked with unbelievers, that he is a stranger and a pilgrim, that his citizenship is in heaven. This implies that the individual disciple of Christ will make a clean break with the world, i.e. with contemporary society, in all those ways of life which would invalidate his discipleship, (and he will find that these ways are many). But we also read that the people of God as a whole, the entire church, is constituted a holy nation, a chosen race, a people belonging peculiarly to God. In other words, the church as a body makes a break with the world,

and operates as a distinct social group dedicated to God. This concept is further fortified by the teaching that when men are born again from above, and come out of darkness into light, they are invited to enter the church, i.e., to step out of one realm into another, "to be translated out of the power of darkness into the Kingdom of the Son of His love." What does all this mean if not that the church is essentially separated from the world order of which it is externally a part. Now this separation from the world, both for the individual Christian and for the whole church, is not merely an artificial protective device to help weak Christians better to meet the enemy or to keep out of temptation, but rather an expression of fundamental reality. The Christian separates himself because he cannot find a home in the World. He is a child of light, how can he live in the darkness? He is naturally separated. He does not, accordingly, detach himself with painful hesitation from the worldly society about him, casting back over his shoulder regretful Lot's wife looks, but rather marvels that any Christian should hanker after the fellowship of the world or find happiness in any form in its company.

The significance of the separation concept for Christian community building is obvious. The members of the church are gathered out of the society of which they are externally a part, and break off connections with many of its activities and persons because of the divergence in ethical and religious standards. Thus, any real community with the unbelieving world becomes impossible. Where then shall the Christian go to find the satisfaction of his various needs for which he is dependent upon others—whether vocational, economic, cultural, social, or spiritual. He must go to those who share his standards, and who are devoted to the same goal, who have the same Lord. Here he can find unclouded fellowship and happy communion; here he can enter into cooperative activities without fear; here he can leave his burdens with the assurance that love will bear them with him; here he can share in perfect community all that he has and is.

5. *The Concept of the Church as a Disciplinary Body.* I hesitate very much to use the term "disciplinary body" here, and do so only for want of a better term. In so doing, I do not think of a "punitive body," which, alas, is what so many both among the laity and the ministry seem to mean by discipline, contrary to the New Testament teaching. I think rather of a restorative body, which by

the various means of grace at its disposal, builds up the weak, restores the fallen, heals the broken and wounded, strengthens the feeble knees, encourages the faint-hearted, equips with weapons those who are unarmed for the fight, knits the hearts of all together in love. Now such discipline, wisely directed by skilled leaders, is a tremendous source of strength for the individual and in turn for the entire body. It contributes to stability, sturdiness, and defensive strength, building up also resources for offensive activity and for all kinds of ministry. It undergirds the entire body with a cohesive unity which vastly multiplies the strength of the individual. All this is obviously a great contribution to true community building. The functioning of the church as a disciplinary body may, however, also become a source of weakness, particularly if the discipline is unintelligent or punitive, or consists primarily of the exercise of authority by one individual over others. Brotherhood and community are destroyed when one of the brethren lords it over God's heritage, even if he holds the highest office of the church. This danger has plagued the Mennonite Church throughout its history; but it need not be so, for it is only the abuse of true scriptural discipline and not the use of it which leads to such tragic consequences.

6. *The Concept of the Suffering church.* Our Anabaptist forefathers understood full well that when they assumed the responsibility of full obedience to Christ they would find themselves in conflict with the world round about them, and that this conflict would lead to suffering. But this did not deter them; it rather drew them closer together in mutual sympathy and strengthening of heart. The fellowship of suffering fortified them for the conflict, and the sense of the common enemy made them realize their interdependence upon one another in faith and prayer and mutual aid. Out of the crucible of tribulation and hardship came a depth of fellow-feeling and love which never would have come out of a life that was only one of ease. Thereby the sense of community was greatly intensified. Have we not also felt this drawing together in times of need and danger? Our hearts go out to each other when suffering and loss become the lot of any one individual, family, or congregation. Truly the concept of the suffering church increases the strength of our community foundations.

7. *The Concept of the Church as a Witness to the Gospel.* Another New Testament concept of the Church which has been

precious to us as Mennonites is that the church in its total redeemed life must be a testimony of the grace and power of God, a witness to the meaning of the gospel and a source of attraction to the sinner. The full message of the good news of the kingdom of God cannot be made clear to a lost world unless the corporate life of the believers shows forth the excellencies of the Saviour. "Ye are the light of the world, ye are the salt of the earth, let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father." All of these "ye's" and "yours" are plural, not singular, and were addressed to a company of disciples. One disciple can do something but not much. Nor is the increased witnessing power of the body primarily due to the multiplication of numbers. It is rather that there are aspects of the gospel, of the kingdom, of the righteousness of God, which cannot be manifested in individuals alone but require the life of a group, in which right relationships of man to man can be expressed. The whole church must display the character and will of God in all its living. There must be a holy society, a godly family life, a Christian community, to express the fullness of the abundant life which Christ came to bring.

8. *The Concept of the Church as the Final Goal of all Christian Work.* In Ephesians 5 the Apostle Paul tells us that "Christ gave himself for the church that he might present it to himself a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." In the third chapter he pledges that the Church will give "glory to God by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end." In this concept of the church we have a vision of the ultimate goal of Christ's redemptive work—a glorious, holy, spotless body which will continue throughout all the ages. Christ's goal must also be our goal. We too must seek to present to our Lord at the end of time this glorious church as the best possible church. We are not only concerned with saving individuals but with saving the whole company of the redeemed as an organic fellowship of the saints, living a corporate life which is conformed to her Lord. This striving for a pure church has been deeply imbedded in our Mennonite thought from the very beginning, and it is deeply scriptural. It has delivered us from an excessive individualism and given us a vision which will challenge us to the end of time, and which requires that the total life of the brotherhood be sanctified. Here again we have another basis for community building.

This brief review of the eight cardinal elements in the Mennonite concept of the church—the vision of the church as a body of Christ, as the dwelling place of God, as a brotherhood of love, as separated from the world, as a disciplinary body, as a suffering church, as a witness to the gospel, and as the final goal of all Christian work, gives us a vision of a holy community with a common life, dedicated to God, knit together in a marvelous way, the object of all our striving and our dreams. Such a church is magnificently equipped, by the grace of God, to meet present-day needs in a twentieth century world. Christian community life will be the inevitable expression of its inner nature, whether locally or on a broad scale. And Christian community life will in turn be a tower of strength to the Church in its total service in the kingdom of God.

Significant consequences for our ethical and social thinking result from the Mennonite conception of the Church as delineated above.

1. In the first place this concept of the church leads the Christian to withdraw his major energies from active participation in the general program of world betterment and attempted reconstruction of the entire non-Christian world order and focus them on the building of the Christian community. His hope for the world is the church and the creation of a Christian social order within the fellowship of the church brotherhood. Extension of this Christian order by the conversion of individuals and their transfer out of the world into the church will be his method of working at saving the world; it is the method Christ and the apostles used; it is the method of the Anabaptist fathers.

2. In the second place, it is within the church as a brotherhood of love that the fullness of the Christian life ideal is to be expressed. This means that what is commonly thought of as *church life* is greatly enriched in quality and extended in scope. Many things will be included within the Church which may seem to some to be secular. In the true sense the Church becomes the Christian community.

3. In the third place the provision of this enriched and extended life will require the service of large numbers of what for want of a better term we call lay-members. The ministers being limited in number and having the all-important and primary function of preaching the Gospel and declaring the whole counsel of God

cannot and should not provide this service, not because they would need to "stoop" to do so, but simply because they cannot do everything and should not rob the laity of their part. Unfortunately in recent years we have been inclined to violate this principle. As the work of the church is enlarged we are tempted (and often fall) to use ordained men for everything, for administrative work, for membership on boards and committees of all types, etc. In consequence the primary work of the ministry often suffers and the true life of the church is handicapped. This practice must be changed. Christian community life functions should be operated and staffed by lay members.

4. In the fourth place we find that the nature of the church brings with it into our community building program a powerful sense of belonging together, of needing each other, of receiving from and giving to each other, that is of great value in Christian community building. But we also see that this feeling requires expression in many and various forms in Christian community life if the full content of the Christian experience and the meaning of the Church is to be satisfied.

Thus, in the light of his church concept, the Mennonite is both pessimistic and optimistic about this world. He does not agree with the Catholic and the Calvinist, who hold that the world as it is can be redeemed as a whole; nor with the social gospeller, humanitarian or evolutionist who hold that it can be gradually transformed into an ideal world of righteousness, peace, and social perfection. On the other hand he does not agree with the Lutheran and many Fundamentalists that it is impossible to do the will of God and obey the teachings of Christ in the present evil world and that therefore we must compromise by participating in the evils of a sub-Christian social order. The Mennonite believes rather that the kingdom of God can be and should be set up within the fellowship of the Church here and now, and lived out to its fullest meaning. The world may be full of devils, as Luther says in his great hymn, but the life within the Christian brotherhood community is satisfyingly full of victory, peace, love, and joy.

CURRENT FORCES ADVERSELY AFFECTING THE LIFE OF THE MENNONITE COMMUNITY

John R. Mumaw

The church is an organized society of believers in which individuals experience the realities of the Gospel, and through which that experience is shared with others. In this paper we are accepting the basic presupposition that the church is a community which offers Christian fellowship through supernatural experience, and which is controlled by Christian sanctions derived from a divine revelation. It is more than a "community of thought and action in the creation and transmission of social values; it is distinctive from all other modes of collective life."[1] It is unique in its divine origin, in its spiritual functions, in the nature of its Christian fellowship which centers in Jesus Christ, and in its ultimate fulfillment of life in the eternal Kingdom.

The historic Mennonite community has embodied these principles with additional characteristics distinguishing it from other denominational groups. Its evangelical creed has had much in common with those of other denominations, but there are also distinctive features which have made its beliefs and practices unique. We use the term community as referring to the collective life of Mennonites bounded by congregational rather than geographical lines.

The life of the Mennonite community constituted the total expression of normal living, under the control of religious sanctions which represent the Mennonite faith. The historic Mennonite community was essentially the creation of a group consciousness, rooted in applied Bible teachings. Such a community operated on the basis of sound economic practices, enhanced by principles of thrift and integrity. Its social relations were usually well regulated, with a desirable intimacy and the spirit of altruism. While Mennonites in America were pioneers in the field of elementary education, until in recent years such elementary education was considered enough. There has been a reasonably good sense of stewardship among property owners. The community was definitely marked with the spirit of Christian brotherhood, which prompted early and generous

[1] H. Sheldon Smith, *Faith and Nurture* (New York, 1942), p. 141.

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mutual burden bearing. That spirit of helpfulness which pervaded the entire community was strengthened by a genuine Christian piety. There was no sophistication, but a practical everyday living of their Christian ideals. Although at times the Mennonite vision of missionary obligations was dim, the community of believers was quick to sense the implications of conduct as a testimony of the Gospel. In recent years definite convictions for more active witnessing have energized the community efforts, and we have now a more aggressive testimony for the world.

The distinctive quality of our Mennonite culture has been characterized further by an unmistakable simplicity of life. The nonresistant attitude, with no inclination to inaugurate litigation, and with a repeated refusal to participate in war, has persisted through the centuries. The practice of nonconformity has in varying degrees provoked a measure of social ostracism. Our forefathers dared to be different. They rejected unequal yokes in matters of business, of society, of religion, and in marriage, frequently refusing lucrative offers and popular invitations to enter into partnerships with unbelievers. The affirmation displaced swearing in legal transactions. Trust in God's prompting of the brotherhood to relieve distress in times of emergency and reverses was preferred to making investments in life insurance.

Mennonites have been essentially an agricultural people working and worshiping together without any class distinctions or prejudice. A quiet manner of life allowed the modest church in the center of the community its share of influence upon the general behaviour of the group. People lived together as one family, serving for the common good of all, and for the glory of God.

The Mennonite faith has been rooted in a conservative theology. People believed in the Bible implicitly and did not hesitate to accept it, particularly the New Testament, as an infallible guide in life. Whatever could be proved by the Scriptures became a settled policy. It was this attitude toward the teachings of the Bible and the practice of those principles that brought upon our forefathers severe persecutions. It tended to make them a bit retiring from the general populace. The social persecution that followed in later years kept that pattern of behaviour alive. That type of isolation, combined with the agricultural privacy of pioneer days and the solidarity of the family life, made it comparatively easy to maintain

a community life that was nonconformed to the world. But conditions have changed and we are now facing forces that are affecting adversely the life of the traditional Mennonite community.

I. The Influence of Materialism

Materialism is an explanation of the meaning of life in terms of physical matter and material interests. It includes forces that rise from two related categories of influence. The one is a pattern of thought-control derived from certain philosophic interpretations of life, and the other is a pattern of behaviour derived from experience with material possessions. Both have become potent forces affecting the Mennonite community.

The first aspect of this materialistic philosophy of life is rooted in the Darwinian theory of evolution. It makes life an end in itself, glorifying mere body functions as the supreme purpose of being. It holds no hope for life after death, and it senses no obligation to authority outside of man and his society. It says that one might as well enjoy the pleasures of sensual gratification, and indulge in all the available physical comforts, without consideration of any proposed higher laws.

This type of thinking denies the essential nature of the Gospel and its benefits to the Christian community. It kills interest in the spiritual values of life.[2] It destroys personal concern in the life to come. It lessens respect for human life and personality. Its evaluation of the Church and Christian institutions is inadequate. It denies the reality of fellowship with God, and of personal experience with the Lord Jesus Christ. The insidious influence of such thinking militates against love and respect for those ideals of faith that have so long and so satisfactorily governed the life of our Mennonite communities.

We dare not ignore the fact that this type of materialism has made an impact upon our Mennonite thinking through the public schools. Our educational system and curriculum have been subtle carriers of this false notion of life. The Church has set up some teaching agencies to counteract the influence but they are by no means adequate. While we have been fairly successful in establishing a strong resistance against the Darwinian theory of the origin of man, we have not counteracted so well certain other related theories.

[2] Guy F. Hershberger, Mennonites and Materialism, *Gospel Herald,* January 12, 1945, p. 828.

The second aspect of this materialistic philosophy of life is reflected in our economic practices. While very few of our Mennonite people would admit the adoption of theories advanced by Karl Marx, there is evidence among us that his materialistic ideas have found some acceptance in modified forms. Marx believed that the oppressed classes should unite and, with the combined force of the masses, coerce the rulers of industry to accept the terms of the laboring class. This principle has been a governing factor in the history of organized labor. Some Mennonites have compromised the principle of nonresistance in joining labor unions. It appears also that they have convinced themselves that a "job" is more important than a doctrine. It is quite evident that some failed to see the relation of the one to the other, while others were not well persuaded on the point.

Many of our people are being influenced in their economic practices by a strong urge to accumulate wealth. They are living for the dollar. Major decisions are influenced strongly by the question, "Does it pay?" When people constantly make material gain their measure of success they are governed by this second type of materialism. These forces have made tremendous inroads upon our Mennonite communities. The passion for earning, spending, and accumulating sets up a spirit of unwholesome rivalry within the community. When such unhealthy competition rises, the sense of brotherhood is lost. The community life disintegrates and the ties that bind human hearts in Christian fellowship are broken.

This passion for wealth has invited the use of mechanical power. The more conservative groups have retarded the invasion of machinery somewhat by their strict regulations on the use of new inventions. A part of their nonconformity consists of keeping these innovations out of their communities. We are facing a new era of mechanical devices. Travel facilities will be increased in speed, in convenience, and in comfort. Our means of communication will all be improved and popularized. Agricultural pursuits will become more highly mechanized. The cost of living will therefore be increased, and both the family and community will lose more of its economic independence.

We are being brought into the very heart of the larger society through the radio and television. In reverse it brings the impact of a materialistic culture into the heart of the Mennonite community,

and into the center of its most vital institution, the home. We have already felt the impact of influence from this modern life. O. E. Baker says, "a new culture has emerged, a modern urban culture, powerful, pervasive, permeating now into the remotest rural districts, materialistic, with a philosophy tending toward paganism."[3] The force of such a philosophy has altered the desires of many people. In making adjustments to this situation we have a tendency to move away from the foundations of our faith. This accommodation to the popular mind breaks down our love for, and our loyalty to, the historic principles of Mennonite life.

The most serious effect of this materialistic philosophy is discovered in the forces that help to disintegrate the home. It gives parents a false notion of the function of marriage. It gives license to sensual indulgences that forbid happiness and permanence in family relations. It builds the semblance of a home on the philosophy of pleasure which can not long endure. It makes the home an office of industry instead of a center of Christian culture. It is governed by principles of false economy and neglects its nobler duties of child nurture. If the Mennonite community is to survive the influence of materialism it must give more serious attention to the foundations of the home and to the preservation of Christian principles in the family life.

2. The Impact of Modern Education

The original Mennonite ideals as conceived by the founders of the Church bear the marks of higher education. These men were influenced by the university culture of their day. Through the years of persecution and martyrdom the leadership was shifted from men of learning to an uneducated common people.[4] Furthermore, the unpopularity of the Anabaptist faith forbade to children of Mennonite homes the privileges of school and books.

When Mennonites came to America there was a definite interest in elementary training, but they lacked enthusiasm for higher education. This attitude is in gradual process of change with a rapid increase of interest in college and university training during the past three or four decades. We have become more and more susceptible

[3] O. E. Baker, "The Rural Family and its Significance to Organized Religion," *The Christian Rural Fellowship Bulletin,* No. 43, June, 1939, p. 3.

[4] Don E. Smucker, "The Influence of Public Schools on Mennonite Ideals and Its Implications for the Future," *Proceedings of Second Annual Conference on Mennonite Cultural Problems,* p. 45.

to the influences of education, and we have accepted with some misgivings the desirability of having a few well-trained men in the Church. For many years the need for scholarship was barely acknowledged, and few young people were encouraged to take advanced training because of fears that they would be lost to the Church.

The acceptance of higher education in the Mennonite community presents a new force that militates against our traditional beliefs and practices. It has induced many to discard their former culture, and some who retained their membership with the church have initiated the acceptance of new ideas. University professors like Dewey, Kilpatrick, and James, with their pragmatic philosophy of education and their naturalistic views of religion, have had a widespread influence over the educational systems of our generation. Mennonite students who found their way into universities and state colleges were exposed to their influence, and some were led to adopt broader views of religious tolerance and of social obligation. Don E. Smucker points to the tendency of Mennonite teachers in the public school system to discard fundamental convictions, and to participate in public activities and community organizations. The social isolation resulting from traditional Mennonite practices and attitudes is unwelcome to many. Smucker's paper goes on to show that not a few such teachers have abandoned their peace testimony in order to stay in the public school system.[5] This lapse of faith represents the fruit of materialism, and bears the marks of secularization.

This draws our attention to the fact that educational pursuits generally lead in the direction of some profession. The explanation is not too clear, but for some reason it has been difficult for the Mennonite Church to hold professionals. Although they may have engaged in enterprises that contributed to social welfare, there has been a distinct loss of talent to the church, and a greater loss of spiritual convictions to the trained persons. The professions have taken some of the best potential leadership away from the Mennonite community. Many such useful Mennonite people have been submerged in the secularism of a consuming world.

Even among those who did not enter the professions, education has had a tendency to lead the Church into regrettable accom-

[5] Smucker, *Ibid.*, p. 51.

modations of doctrine and practice. Their training made a bid for a higher social standing than that offered by the church. They were tempted to conceal their identity and made adjustments to fit into the larger world society. Frequently those who are more highly trained think they are misfits among the uneducated of their home circles and in seeking a higher social status create friendships outside of the Mennonite community. They seem to feel more at home among "outsiders". This trend makes it easier to participate in outside organizations.

These same forces are influencing the Mennonite community through the public schools. The social pressures and the educational drives are turning our youth away. The curriculums are highly secularized and are geared to indoctrinate students with a mode of thinking that is receptive or even submissive to the influence of the secular state. The environment is governed with a code of ethics that is foreign to our Christian interpretations of the Bible. Mennonite youth form friendships with worldly-minded students; these form the background of social pressure that often makes it hard for the lads to retain their nonresistant position under conscription. This breakdown of Mennonite principles is the result of a gradual but persistent influence of the total society. Our youth have been in too close contact with the world without sufficient guidance to keep them interested in the church community.

We have been trying to convince ourselves that the home provides a supplementary training for the child, sufficient to counteract these subtle influences. While it is admitted that the family is the logical institution for sustaining the basic ideals of our faith, we must also admit that there must have been far too many ineffective homes. The family has failed to overcome the adverse forces pressing against it and the church.

Having considered the influence of higher education and public education, we must now bring to your attention the current forces operating through the channels of popular education. We refer to the movie and the radio. In an article by Don E. Smucker on "What Shall We Do About the Movies?", the author shows that the movies are more than an amusement center. They "provide an educational system which shapes attitudes, determines beliefs, and actually affects the bodily and mental health of those who attend them." The commercial movies have a detrimental effect upon the emotions

and minds of people. They are definite feeders to race prejudice and juvenile delinquency. They are an effective vehicle for political and military propaganda. False notions of sex and marriage are paraded without shame or retribution. Movie attendance such as now obtains among Mennonite youth is certain to affect seriously the life of the Mennonite community. It is a most powerful instrument as a visual aid in education. Experiments have revealed that a child retains seventy per cent of what it sees on the screen. We dare not let the cinema use this means to misdirect the lives of our youth.

Another channel of popular education is the radio. It is a possible agency for good or evil. There is no doubt that much good has been accomplished over the air, but we are concerned about what it is doing to the life of the Mennonite community. The promoters of this war have probably had no better means of propaganda than the radio. Many minds have yielded to the subtle influence of political and military speakers. According to the survey made by Ernest E. Miller in 1939 we conclude that not a few Mennonites have been subjected to the strain of "war nerves" and the influence of so-called evangelical militarists. While the items most popular with the Mennonite group are "religious programs, sacred music, news, and market reports",[6] it must be observed that the sponsors of the majority of these religious programs are opposed to nonresistance, and care little for our practices of nonconformity, two major characteristics of our Mennonite life. It must be remembered also that the news reports are sharply influenced by war propagandists. Thus, with the additional possibilities of tuning in on pleasure programs of the baser sort, and of television bringing objectionable movies into our homes, we face in the radio a factor with disturbing potentialities, affecting the life of the Mennonite community. Again we see that evil forces are at work in the most vital unit of our Christian society, the home. The invasion of evil strikes most surely and most powerfully at this vantage point. As the family is weakened, the community suffers.

3. The Effects of Urbanization

Urbanization is the process of change affecting the social structure of a community in which it is led to adopt city practices. J.

[6] E. E. Miller, "The Use of the Radio among the Mennonites of the Indiana-Michigan Conference," *Mennonite Quarterly Review,* July 1940, p. 18.

Winfield Fretz in an article, "The Effects of Urbanization upon the Mennonites", suggests seven characteristics of modern cities. The first of these is the impersonality of people who live and work there. Few people know each other intimately. Loose social relations allow the employer and employee to pass each other on their way to work without so much as a friendly "good morning." Dwellers in apartment houses live side by side without learning to know each other. The spirit of neighborliness is rare.

Another characteristic of urban life is its cold cash basis. The money economy is directed through hard-headed business transactions, without feelings of friendship. Things are done on a commercial basis without the attachments of sentimental personal relations.

The city produces a high degree of stimulation. The glaring lights, the billboards, the loud speakers, the attractive advertisements in magazines and newspapers are designed to catch the attention of the public eye. The city dweller has many opportunities to participate in social functions. He is easily drawn into questionable social behaviour. He sees too much going on to stay quietly at home.

Modern urban life tends toward sophistication. There are too many inducements tempting people to try to be something which they are not. The working classes often appear on the streets dressed like the most wealthy people of the city. Such people are given to much spending and may have little left for the other necessities of life.

Social class distinctions are found among urban people. The extremes of the elite rich and the miserable poor are there. In addition to these contrasts between wealth and poverty there are segregations of race and occupational classes.

The city is a place of many changes. Experimentation with ideas, the introduction of novel methods, the discarding of old customs, the acceptance of new ways, all tend to break down social stability. The community and family life are very loosely tied together. Delinquency, vice, and crime are most frequently found in urban areas.

The final characteristic which Fretz mentions is social freedom. The usual restraints of public opinion in rural areas are frequently absent in the city. People can take license in moral and ethical

matters under the cover of being unknown only a few blocks from home. Immoral practices are tolerated and promiscuous social life goes unnoticed. The influence of the community church is felt only slightly.

All this is in sharp contrast with what was said earlier about the traditional manner of life among Mennonites. While the process of urbanization is most extremely felt in the city, we must remember that it reaches into rural communities also. One of the most noticeable effects of urbanization comes through the influence of materialism. Since we have discussed that in the earlier part of this paper, it is enough at this point to say that its roots have their source in city practices. In another section of this paper a paragraph was devoted to the consideration of the movies as a vehicle of education. The movies are also an amusement center for the entertainment of urban people in their long hours of leisure, but their influence does not stop with the city folks. The movies have allured Mennonite young people from rural communities, and are giving them desires for unwholesome activities. It tends to make them dissatisfied with their more worthwhile social activities in the local community.

In so far as our Mennonite communities are becoming urbanized a certain measure of sophistication is setting in. The traditional forms of simple hospitality are being lost. The host and hostess think a certain amount of preparation must be made before guests can be entertained. We do not want people to see us in our daily surroundings; we prefer to have everything set in order. Such fellowship is unnatural and a bit unfriendly to the spiritual values of the community life.

The effects of urbanization are most noticeable among those who migrate to the city. High wages are shortly consumed by a comparable high cost of living. The so-called high standards of living are an illusion which fails to provide the anticipated economic security. Far too many Mennonite youths, have been drifting to the cities, losing their traditional life and convictions to a poorly constructed philosophy of urban life, and to a more poorly adjusted social and religious experience.

The most detrimental effect of urbanization on the life of the Mennonite community is its failure to maintain the integrity of the family unit. Members of the family create friendships with

people in separate circles. They go to work at different hours and find no time for common fellowship in the family circle. In many homes it is almost impossible to have a common worship experience, with all members present at the family altar. Furthermore, it has been pointed out by students of sociology that the urban population does not reproduce itself. The urbanized Mennonite community is no exception to this trend.

If the Mennonite community is to be vitalized with a pattern of life that remains true to its own traditions and religious persuasions, something must be done to protect the home from the hostile influences of urbanization. This pertains to her distinctive doctrines of nonconformity and nonresistance as well as to the sanctity of the family ideal. O. E. Baker says, "The need, the essential, as I sense it, is a vitalizing spirit arising from the acceptance of worthy ideals, a nationalistic or humanitarian conviction partaking of religious fervor. We must subordinate the temporal values now characteristic of urban life, and accept as our guide the more permanent values of rural life."[7] We need also the Spirit of regeneration to rekindle in our hearts the solemn conviction that these beliefs and practices are derived from the Word of God; and that these spiritual values must be carried over into the personal persuasions of each oncoming generation. We must have Christian homes that will function under the protection and blessing of God.

4. The Force of Secularization

Secularization is a process in the social relations of the community by which the things that are commonly regarded sacred become secular. It is the means by which those factors in life having had religious sanction are governed by a philosophy which allows activities of life to be carried on without religious sanction. In the final analysis, it resolves itself to a compromise from a position of separation from the world to a life that is conformed to world standards and opinions.

The most evident effects of secularization express themselves through compromise. When the interests of the community mind are consumed in enterprises other than the religious life of the community, the importance of the religious sanctions of the community tend to be minimized. A few years ago Karl Baehr made

[7] O. E. Baker, *loc. cit.*, p. 9.

a careful survey of four branches of Mennonites in Elkhart County, Indiana, namely the Old Order Amish, Conservative Amish, Mennonite, and Central Conference Mennonite groups, to study the influences of the secular world upon Mennonites.[8] His study includes items such as law observance, property holdings, family life, mixed marriages, activities and programs, place and function of the minister, as well as church property and finances. His general conclusions rest primarily upon the thesis that urbanization has a definite secularizing effect upon the life of the Mennonite community in its relation to the world.

This author holds that the groups become more urban as one moves from the Old Order Amish to the Central Conference Mennonites. In accordance with this the type of enterprise considered for an investment is in the general direction of the non-agricultural, such as business and industry. He logically raises the question whether the Mennonite principles can be maintained permanently in a business and industrial environment. He points to the individualism of urban culture as a force that adversely affects the Mennonite brotherhood "from which is derived the social control necessary to keep the principles and practices of the group alive."

Another interesting observation is the tendency of the more liberal groups to participate in the organizations of the world. The participants feel more at home in the outside world, and consequently lose their enthusiasm for maintaining the unique pattern of Mennonite practices. This leads toward a gradual adoption of the conventional understandings of the larger society. It is another means of secularizing more and more of the doctrines and practices of the Mennonites. When any group begins to arrive at conclusions on the basis of any principles other than those of religious sanctions, it tends toward compromise in Christian beliefs and practices.

There is a tendency for urban churches to have a larger number of inactive members. This inactivity is indicative of a secularization which makes it difficult for such members to feel at home in the Church. The traditional beliefs and religious sanctions of the Church are no longer meaningful to them. The former religious values have been substituted by secular values.

[8] Karl Baehr, "Secularization among the Mennonites of Elkhart County, Indiana, *Mennonite Quarterly Review,* July, 1942.

It is evident from this article also that with the more frequent contacts with business, in education and in participation in secular organizations, the frequency of mixed marriages increases. This points to another force adversely affecting the Mennonite community, when persons of the Mennonite community marry outsiders who are not persuaded to adopt the thinking and practices of the group. This does not mean, however, that persons of non-Mennonite blood are incompatible in marriage with those from conventional lines of Mennonite heritage. The possibilities for marital success are good in those instances in which they have whole-heartedly accepted the beliefs and practices of the Mennonite group.

Baehr concludes that the church becomes more liberal as it becomes more urban. It accommodates itself more and more to the type and arrangement of services that are found in other denominations. It appears that the secularization of community life weakens the religious sanctions in matters of worship and removes the traditional practices of the regular Church service. An interesting observation is made also in the fact that the more liberal the group becomes, the more limited and restricted the function of the minister becomes. He suggests that where there are fewer restrictions on matters of dress, and where the minister receives a salary, there is a parallel acceptance of the standards and conventional understandings of the world.

In this study of Mennonite life we observe that urban churches require more money for operating expenses, with less being given for philanthropic, relief, and missionary purposes, than those in the rural districts. It indicates that the influence of urbanization there is a deviation from the original standards of simplicity which have characterized the Mennonite community.

Baehr does not overlook the effect of secularization upon family life. He seems to think, however, that thus far the influence of urbanization and secularization has not penetrated the home and family of any of the Mennonite groups. Such a conclusion is based primarily upon the fact that the husband and wife relationship is still considered sacred. While that is true generally, it seems necessary to call attention to several other items. Certain factors which have militated against the unity of the American home have also definitely influenced the Mennonite family. We have not escaped entirely the insidious forces that have caused the disintegration of family

life. The rush of business and the press of concern with material things has robbed Mennonite homes of their honored parental devotion. The interest in worldly pleasure has drawn the attention of families away from the religious privileges and protection of their homes. Selfish and luxurious living has diverted energies and talents away from the life of the Church. The indifference of fathers and mothers to their parental obligations has allowed children to grow up without sufficient guidance and discipline. The loss of family altars has taken away another vital spiritual force which served in the past to strengthen the unity of the family. Devitalizing forces such as these operating within the home are disrupting the stability of the whole Mennonite community.

5. The Enervation of Religious Tolerance

The process of change in the life of the Mennonite community is not entirely the result of pressures from the outside. There are internal forces at work which are no less disturbing. Among them are factors definitely reducing the spiritual strength of the church. This tends to make her more susceptible to the innovations of modern practice and weakens resistance to the influences of current thought. Disintegration sets in, and elements which unify the Christian community are lost. To trace this enervation of Mennonite culture we turn to the effects of religious tolerance.

Early Mennonites of Europe were born and reared in communities subjected to severe persecutions. Their economic opportunities were limited. They lived under social restrictions. This developed a community life that was flavored by a deep sense of fellowship. Their common sufferings developed a Christian unity that was not easily broken. Theirs was a genuine Christian brotherhood.

S. Floyd Pannabecker summarizes the typical Mennonite viewpoint with the statement of three primary beliefs: the church as a fellowship, the believer's purity of life, and the authority of the Bible literally interpreted. He says, "These three central ideas were fundamental to the early Mennonite Church, and each of them got a definite stimulus from experiences of persecution through which Mennonites went. Under persecution church fellowship developed along the lines of individual responsibility, brotherhood, and mutual aid, so that these qualities came to stand out more pronouncedly than ever in Mennonite character. Similarly under persecution, purity of

life experiences a subtle growth in the direction of separation from the world. Christian virtues continue to receive their proper emphasis but the sense of isolation from the world is deepened."[9]

When our forefathers came to America persecutions ceased; but there were other factors in their environment that helped to hold the Mennonite community together. The barriers of language and the strangeness of their culture helped to keep them from coming in too close contact with the world. Frontier conditions forbade much association with other people. These natural circumstances conditioned and encouraged a rigorous application of religious sanctions which required a definite separation from the world. To this was added a strict discipline which held conscientiously to religious standards upheld by convictions born of a literal interpretation of the Bible.

As these natural barriers were broken down, the religious tolerance accorded Mennonites by the state, and the corresponding social acceptance by the larger society, opened the door to a new order. The mind of the Mennonite community became more and more susceptible to outside influence. Laxity in discipline allowed innovations of religious practice to remain. Historic Mennonite beliefs and practices were subjected to slow revision. The enervating influence of tolerance was unmistakable. The pattern of Mennonite life was modified not only by materialism, education, urbanization, and secularization, but also by a slow process of disintegration.

We dare not ignore the forces now at work within the community. They represent a type of religious tolerance which finds expression in attitudes of indifference and of self-complacency. These, with a spirit of individualism, have robbed the church of its original sense of fellowship. Instead of living together as a large family, the community is broken up into social units that feel little responsibility to each other. Such indifference to the needs and concerns of others will gradually but inevitably weaken the ties of Christian fellowship. Unless an effective teaching program is inaugurated, and unless some means is found to keep the brotherhood doing things together, it will become increasingly more difficult to preserve the historic values of the Mennonite rural community.[10]

[9] S. Floyd Pannabecker, "Environment Factors Influencing Mennonites," *Proceedings of the Second Annual Conference on Mennonite Cultural Problems,* 1943, p. 83.

[10] Guy F. Hershberger, "Maintaining the Mennonite Rural Community," *Mennonite Quarterly Review,* October, 1940, p. 221.

This type of religious tolerance finds expression also in an attitude which tolerates the presence of sin within the community. The spirit of tolerance toward those of questionable and doubtful practices has taken the edge off of our historic sense of piety. The long-cherished reputation of Christian integrity that was once attached to the name Mennonite is in jeopardy. The sturdy morality that was once ascribed to Mennonites is held in question. The discipline of former years has been watered down. Misdemeanors, carnal indulgence, and careless living find too little opposition. Such enervating forces must be overcome if the Mennonite community is to survive the present perils of worldliness and self-complacency.

During the past few decades this same spirit of tolerance has affected the Mennonite attitude toward the Bible. Strange systems of interpretation, new philosophies of Christianity, and a growing tendency toward the criteria of reason have robbed us of historic simplicity in our approach to the Bible. We have been pressed with lines of logic, with demands of theology, and with systems of belief until men are afraid to accept and preach literal interpretations of the Bible. This tendency has confused our principle of nonresistance with a philosophic creed of modern pacifism. It has invited apologies for the literal observance of such Bible teachings as the devotional head covering, the kiss of charity, and feet washing. It has found excuses for innovations that jeopardize practices of separation from the world. It has minimized the literal meanings of prophetic portions of Scripture. It has discredited the authority of the Bible to control our whole manner of life. This trend toward the acceptance of philosophies, systems, and opinions is diluting the waters of eternal life. If the Mennonite community is to be revitalized with the strength of her historic values we must initiate a movement back to the Bible in simple faith and in childlike obedience to its teachings.

It would hardly be fair to close this paper without a reminder that we have been concerned mainly with forces adversely affecting the Mennonite community. Many of the things we have mentioned have been and can be turned to advantage. No attempt has been made here to offer solutions. That something must be done is self-evident. This generation has the oft-repeated task of preserving the religious values of the past, under the pressures of current forces adversely affecting the life of the Mennonite community.

THE EFFECTS OF URBANIZATION ON AMERICAN LIFE AND ON THE CHURCH

O. E. Baker

Several years ago I had the privilege of speaking to the young people in Bluffton and Goshen Colleges. At that time I was in the Department of Agriculture, engaged in surveys of the ways in which young people got started in farming, with a view to discovering how this process might be facilitated.

At Bluffton College I was much impressed with the work in art and with the other provisions to maintain a rural culture appreciative of the beauty of the natural world. At Goshen College I was equally impressed with the spirit of scholarship, which I had previously observed in the Mennonite Quarterly Review and which I now saw implemented with a new library building. In the basement of this building Dean Harold S. Bender showed me a remarkable collection of historical documents, letters, newspaper notices and other materials bearing upon the development of the Mennonite Church in America.

That evening I spoke to the young people in the chapel, with some older people present, and as I looked at the earnest faces of the young men and the unpainted and sincere faces of the modestly dressed young women, wearing the symbolic lace cap, I thought: here is the hope of our nation; indeed, here is the hope of the world. The audience was an inspiration to me, and I think I spoke better than I usually do. At the close of the meeting several boys came to me and asked if I could remain over the next day, as they would like to have a conference with me. I was glad to do so.

At this conference, held in a large room in the dormitory, forty young men were present. To start the discussion I asked each man whether he had been reared on a farm. Thirty-eight of the forty boys replied yes. Then I asked each young man what occupation he had hopes of following, and only one replied farming. One other hoped to become a country doctor. This is as worthy an occupation as that of farmer. May I note, in passing, that our eldest daughter is preparing to be a physician. I hope she too will become a doctor among our rural people, many of whom need medical services urgently.

That night, riding back to Washington on the train, the pity of this situation among the young men of Goshen College came repeatedly to mind. Here was a college built out of the savings and sincere convictions of rural people, presumably with the hope of the preservation of Mennonite culture, and that because of this education their children would be able to develop a fuller personality, and would be more effective than the parents had been in doing the will of God. Doubtless these college students also thought that by leaving the farms and moving to the cities they were widening their opportunity for service and the development of personality. Probably some of the college faculty shared this opinion. Instead, as I tried to point out the night before, it seemed to me they were hastening the doom of the Mennonite Church.

The next day I decided to write a letter to President Miller of the college, and I should like to read to you most of this letter:

The visit to Goshen College was of deep interest to me. The occupational preference of the students whom I met at the dormitory the evening after my lecture, at their request, and the attitude of most of these students toward rural life, again revealed to me how powerful and pervasive is our modern urban culture. When these youth go to the city, as 90 per cent of them apparently hope to do, and join other churches than the Mennonite, if they join any (because there will be in most cases no Mennonite Church in the city for them to join), a question arises in my mind as to whether the Church will survive more than one generation.

I believe the Mennonite traditions and values are important, at least they have been associated with the survival of the Mennonites as a people for several hundred years. The birth rates among our city peoples, on the other hand, are so low as to inevitably result in the rapid approach toward extinction of the families who live according to the values of this urban culture. If science teaches one word as more important than any other, it is the word "survive." It gives me concern to see a rising generation so glibly turning its back on a culture which has clearly tended toward survival and seeking instead a culture which so clearly tends toward extinction of the families and of the races which accept it.

I have reluctantly come to the conclusion that the conditions of living and the philosophies of life associated with our present day urban civilization probably cannot be so altered as to prevent a decline in the population and strength of the Nation. We need a new rural culture which will combine the mechanical conveniences that science has enabled our urban culture to acquire with the system of values that the rural people, particularly such people as the Mennonites, have developed during hundreds of years of struggle, and, if I may be permitted to add an opinion, as guided by a divine purpose.

Clearly youth must contribute most of our leaders in the development of this new rural culture. If our colleges and universities facilitate, indeed

almost compel, the more ambitious and better educated of our rural youth to go to the cities to live and partake of the spirit of our urban culture, the hope of developing a permanent rural culture must be postponed until other institutions are devised to train the leaders among our rural youth.

The basic weakness in the entire situation appears to be the rural home and the ideals and attitudes of the parents in those homes. I hope that our denominational colleges, and I trust that Goshen College may be among them, will catch the vision of an extension service directed toward the revival among our rural people of respect for their occupation, which with the rapid advance of scientific knowledge now partakes of the character of a profession.

The agricultural colleges and the Department of Agriculture have developed an extension service to provide technical information and advice in the production and marketing of farm products. These institutions have also seen the need of doing something more, for without ideals the farming people perish. But the denominational colleges could develop this more urgent and, in my opinion, even more important type of extension work with skill and wisdom. I hope that you and your colleagues at Goshen College may consider this need of your rural people and minister to them . . . effectively. . . .

It was a pleasure to meet you and Mrs. Miller and become acquainted with so many of the professors and students at Goshen College. I was interested in the scholarly work Professors Bender, Hershberger, and others were doing in the collection of historical material now housed in the basement of the splendid new library building. My surmise that the Mennonites are quite different from the Amish in their respect for education was confirmed by my visit to Bluffton and Goshen Colleges. I was much impressed with the library facilities at both of these institutions and the scholarly ideals of some of their professors.

This morning I wish to present to you some of the evidence in support of my conclusion that our modern urban culture is ephemeral, and that the Christian rural culture, as exemplified by the Mennonite Church, is lasting. My major premise is that the family is the basic institution of human society, and that history reveals clearly that there is no substitute for this institution of the family. My minor premise is that the functions of the family are primarily the reproduction of the race and the transmission of wealth and of culture from generation to generation. My conclusion is that when the family fails to function in these three ways the society based on this declining institution of the family will die out.

The Family as an Institution for the Reproduction of the Race

Let us consider first the failure of our modern urban family to reproduce the race. May I now speak to you through the eye

as well as the ear. You will see in this graph (figure 1), that there were about 230 children under five years of age per 1,000 women 15 to 45 years of age in the seven cities largely of American stock when the census was taken in 1930. As it required then about 370 children per 1,000 women of child-bearing age to hold the population permanently stationary in the cities without accessions from outside, it is clear that there was a deficit of about 40 per cent below this level. In all cities of over 100,000 population the deficit was about 20 percent, while for the smaller cities of 2,500 to 100,000 population the deficit was seven per cent. On the other hand, in the rural non-farm, mostly village population, there was a surplus of children above the number necessary to hold the population stationary, of 27 per cent; and in the farm population a surplus of 50 per cent.

The rural surplus more than balanced the urban deficit in 1930; that is, if no change occurred the nation's population would continue to increase permanently although slowly. But between 1930 and 1940 the reproduction rate declined 14 per cent, and this decline was as large in the rural as in the urban population, probably for the first time in the nation's history. Urban ideals, styles and attitudes evidently were permeating rapidly among the rural people. Averaging the years 1937, 1938, and 1939, the census of 1940 revealed, to express it simply, that ten adults in the cities were rearing seven children, and that ten adults on the farms were rearing fourteen children.

Reproduction Rates by Occupation Groups

Now, what are the conditions associated with this decline in children? The census of 1940 has not yet made available a tabulation of the ratio of children to women by occupations, but the Milbank Memorial Fund financed the tabulation, under Dr. Notestein's direction, of hundreds of thousands of records of families in the East North Central States, reported in earlier censuses, and some of the results are summarized in figure 2. It will be seen that (after allowing for age of mother, duration of marriage, and other factors) farm laborers had more children than farm tenants, tenants more than owners, farm owners more than unskilled laborers in the cities, the unskilled 25 per cent more than the skilled, and the skilled workers 27 per cent more than the business men. The professional

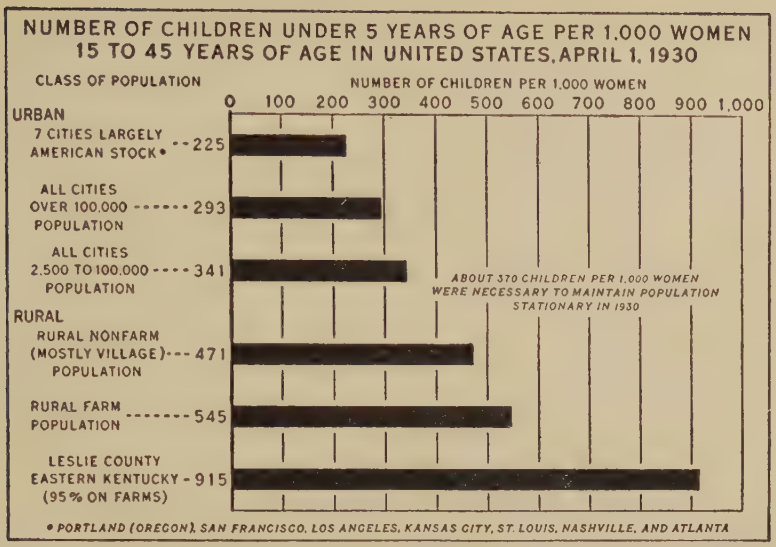


FIGURE 1.—In 1930 the seven cities largely of American stock lacked 40 percent of having enough children to maintain their population permanently stationary without accessions from outside, and all cities of over 100,000 population had a deficit of 20 percent, while the smaller cities had a deficit of 7 percent. On the other hand, the rural nonfarm (mostly village and suburban) population had a surplus of 27 percent, and the farm population of 50 percent. In 1930, urban deficit and rural surplus nearly balanced. Since 1930 births have declined 10 percent.

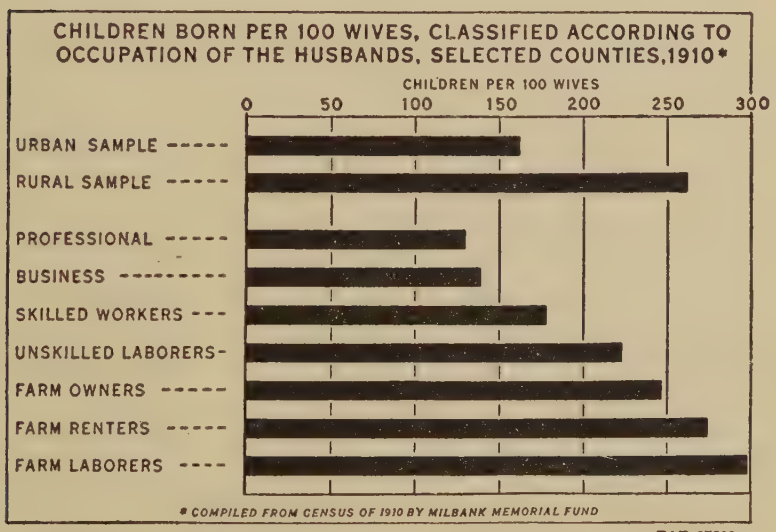


FIGURE 2.—In 1929 the Milbank Memorial Fund tabulated the returns from the 1910 census inquiry, "Mother of how many children: Number born ——", for 100,000 native white women classified by occupation of husband. The results were standardized for age of wife, duration of marriage, etc. Farm laborers averaged 9 percent more children born than tenants and these 12 percent more than owner operators. But farm owner operators averaged 11 percent more than unskilled laborers in the cities, while the unskilled averaged 25 percent more than the skilled, and these 27 percent more than businessmen.

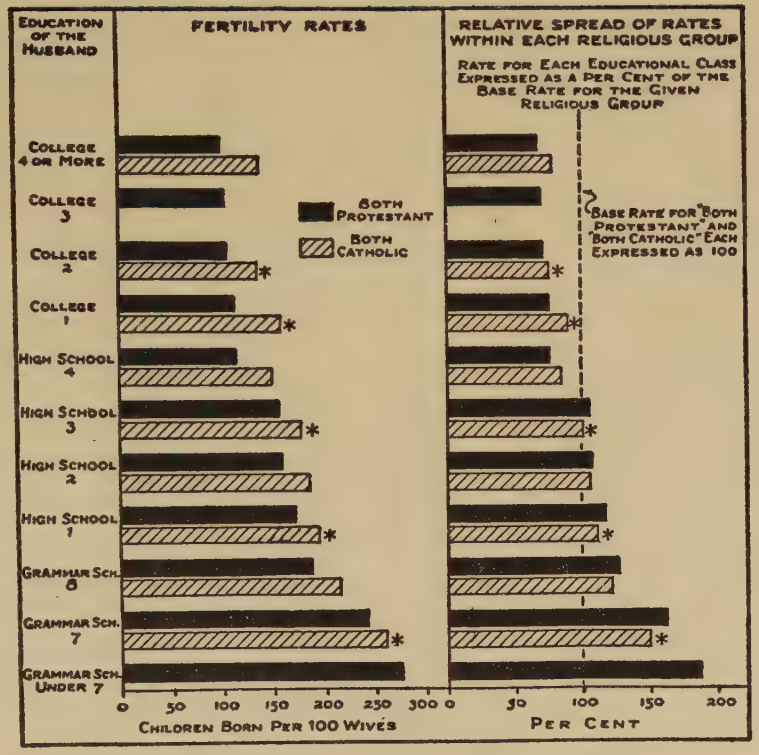
men had even a smaller average number of children than the business men.

Reproduction Rates by Education and Religion

The 1940 census, likewise, has not provided as yet any correlations of the reproduction rate with education and religion; but the Carnegie Foundation in association with the Milbank Fund financed a complete survey of the city of Indianapolis a couple of years ago with the results briefly presented in figures 3, 4, 5, and 6. These graphs are photographic enlargements of illustrations in the *Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly* for July 1943 and January 1944, to which I would refer you for further information. May I now read to you a summary of this survey which I read at the Family Life Conference held in the Catholic University of America in Washington, January 30, 1945:

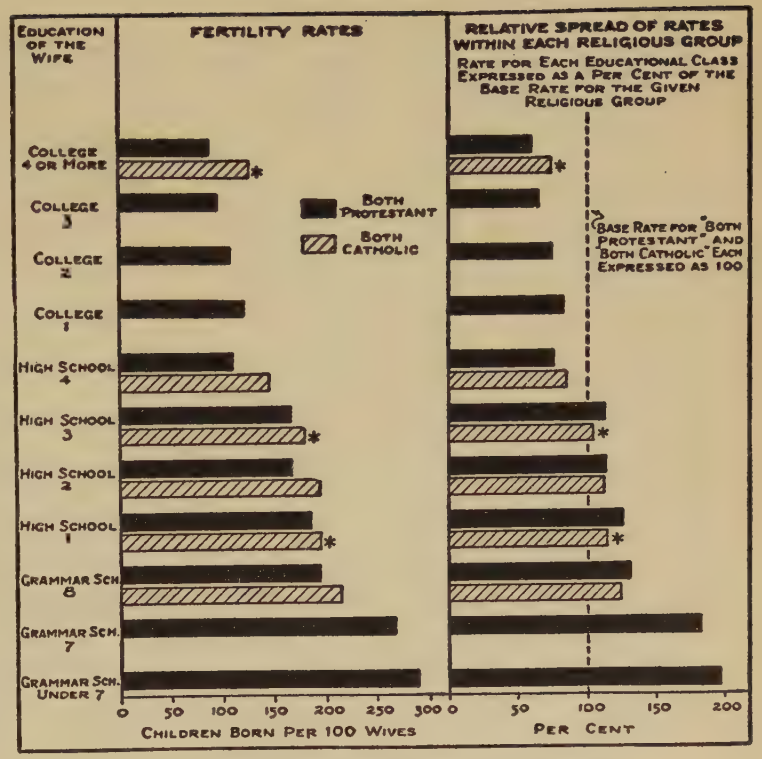
Fertility, Protestant and Catholic, as Influenced by the Grades of School Completed

"In figure 3 it will be noted that in all native white families in which the completed academic education of the husband ranged from less than the seventh grade in the grammar school to four years or more of college, the fertility of Catholics exceeded that of Protestants in such education group. More significant, perhaps, is the fact that the more prolonged the education the greater the difference between Catholic and Protestant families. Among the husbands who completed their academic education with the seventh grade the difference between Catholics and Protestants is about eight per cent, whereas among college graduates it is about 40 per cent. But neither the Catholic nor Protestant college graduates are reproducing themselves, the deficiency among the Catholic families being about 25 per cent and among the Protestant families about 50 per cent. It is necessary to go down the educational ladder to the third year in high school to reach the stage of education where the Catholic husbands are reproducing themselves, while for Protestant husbands it is necessary to descend the ladder to the grammar school stage. It will be noted further that the great drop in fertility occurs between the husbands, both Catholic and Protestant, who have completed the third year of high school only and those who have graduated. High school and college graduates differ only slightly in



* Rate based on 100–299 wives. Rates based on fewer cases are not shown.

Fig. 3. Total number of children ever born per 100 wives 15-44 years of age, by educational attainment of the husband and by religion of the couple. Native-white couples in the Indianapolis Household Survey. Rates standardized for age.



* Rate based on 100–299 wives. Rates based on fewer cases are not shown.

Fig. 4. Total number of children ever born per 100 wives 15-44 years of age, by educational attainment of the wife and by religion of the couple. Native-white couples in the Indianapolis Household Survey. Rates standardized for age.

fertility; indeed, for completed families (wife 40-44 years of age), there is no difference. There is another break in fertility between the husbands who have completed seven grades only, and those who have completed eight grades only of grammar school education. Finally, it should be noted that the Protestant husbands who have had less than seven grades of grammar school education have more than twice as many children as those who have graduated from high school or attended college. There were not a sufficient number of Catholic husbands with less than seven grades of education to provide a safe fertility rate, but probably it is only a little higher than that of the Protestants with like schooling. The Catholics in Indianapolis were only one-eighth as numerous as the Protestants.

"Passing now to the wife (figure 4), it is clear that the influences of education and religious affiliation are very similar to those on the husband. Among those who had completed only the grammar school grades, the difference between Catholic and Protestant wives was only about three per cent, whereas among those who had completed high school only it was 22 percent, and among college graduates the difference was about 40 per cent. Again the big breaks occurred among both Catholics and Protestants between the third and fourth year of high school, and among the Protestants at least between the seventh and eighth grades of grammar school. Except for a somewhat greater range between grammar school and college level, the fertility rates at all stages of education and religion were much the same for wives as for husbands.

"Let us now consider the fertility rates for those families where husband and wife were both Catholic or both Protestant (fig. 5). Among those who did not go beyond the grammar school there is again little difference between Catholic and Protestant, but in the college group the difference is large—about 35 per cent. Relative to education, the husband and wife again seem to have about the same influence on fertility. In view of the fact that most couples are either both Protestant or both Catholic one would expect little difference between this graph and the preceding. But it should be realized that the Catholic couples who are reproducing themselves are those with eleven grades or less of schooling, and that the Protestant couples who are reproducing themselves are those with less than nine grades of schooling. And it should also be realized that the trend is toward more and more schooling. It is clear that

schooling is more powerful than religion among the Catholic couples in its effect on the size of families, but less powerful than among Protestants. However, before we consider this matter further let us note the influence of mixed marriages of Protestants with Catholics on fertility.

Fertility of Mixed Marriages

"For such families in which the wife had had one or more years of college education the number of children born per 100 wives was 89, as compared with 99 for both parents Protestants and and 139 for both parents Catholic. For such mixed marriages in which the wife had had one or more years of high school education but no college training, the number of children per 100 wives was 119, as compared with 131 for both parents Protestant and 160 for both parents Catholic. For such mixed marriages in which the wife had had only a grammar school education, the number of children per 100 wives was 182, as compared with 211 for both parents Protestant and 217 for both parents Catholic. Averaging all grades of education, the number of children born per 100 wives was 132 for husband Protestant, wife Catholic; 133 for husband Catholic, wife Protestant; 147 for both parents Protestant and 173 for both parents Catholic.

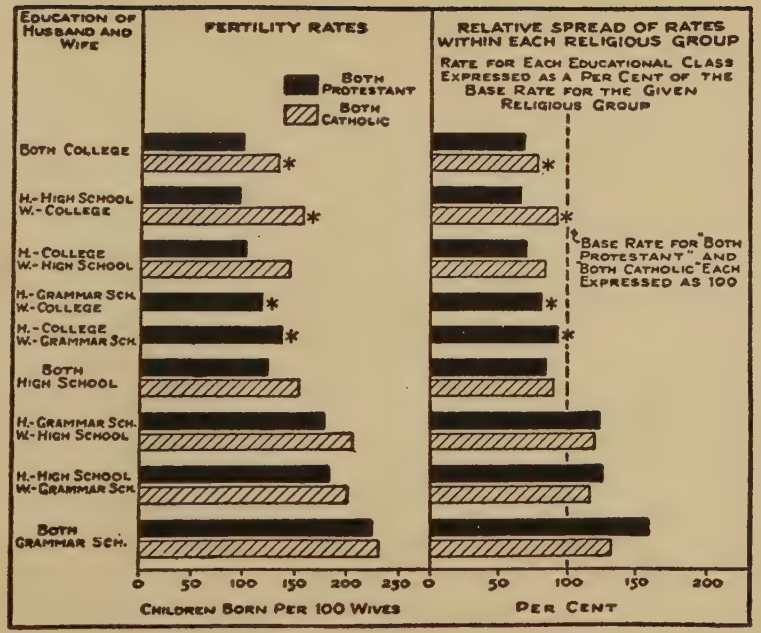
Fertility of Jewish Couples

"Fewest of all were the number of children among the Jewish couples—only 110 per 100 wives. Ten adult Hebrews were rearing apparently only six children. This might not be true of other cities.

Fertility of Protestants and Catholics as Influenced by Rental Values of Dwelling

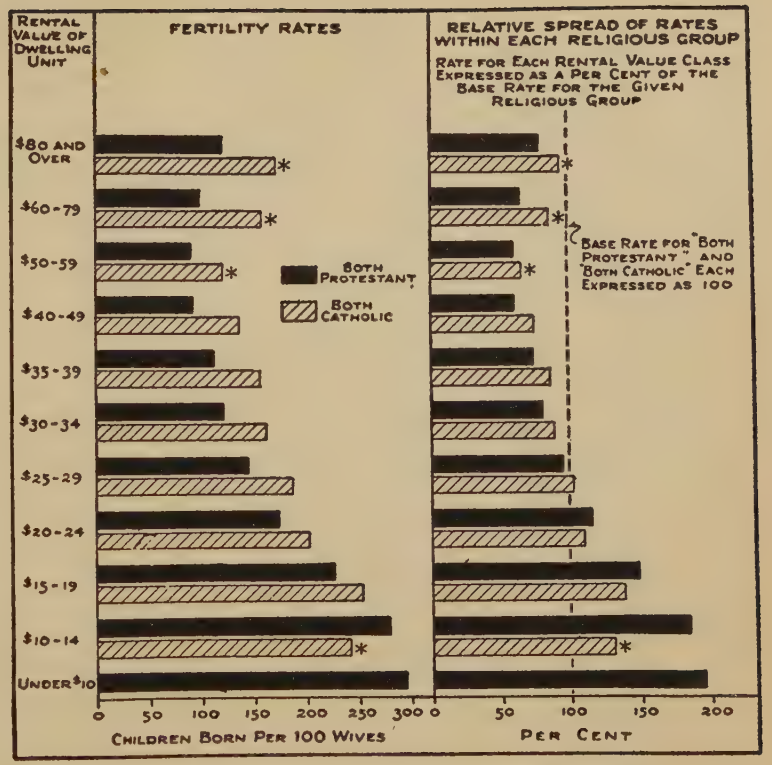
"One other correlation between fertility and religious affiliation requires notice; namely, with rental value of dwelling. It will be seen in figure 6 that families paying less than $15 a month rent have about the same number of children as families in which the husband or wife or both had less than seven grades of schooling. Probably the two groups contain largely the same families. As with education, there is little difference in fertility between Catholic and Protestant families in these poverty-stricken families.

"With each increase in rental value of dwelling the size of the



* Rate based on 100–299 wives. Rates based on fewer cases are not shown.

Fig. 5. Total number of children ever born per 100 wives 15-44 years of age, by educational attainment and religion of the couple. Native-white couples in the Indianapolis Household Survey.



* Rate based on 100–299 wives. Rates based on fewer cases are not shown.

Fig. 6. Total number of children ever born per 100 wives 15-44 years of age, by monthly rental value of the dwelling unit and by religion of the couple. Native-white couples in the Indianapolis Household Survey. Rates standardized for age.

family decreases, among both Protestants and Catholics, until the rental group $50-$59 a month is reached, when, unlike extent of education, an increase in fertility occurs, especially among the Catholic families. In the two highest rental groups, $60-$79, and $80 and over, the size of the Catholic families exceeds the size of the Protestant families by an average of about 50 per cent—a higher percentage even than among the college graduates.

"If there be any correlation between college education and inherent ability, and between rental value of dwelling and inherent ability—and I think there is—it is clear that the Catholic families of Indianapolis are making an eugenic contribution 40 to 50 percent larger than the Protestant families. On the other hand, the Catholic fertility in the lowest rental value groups is little, if any, larger than the Protestant, and among the lowest education groups is only a little larger. In other words, the Catholic families apparently are making a much greater positive contribution to eugenic progress than the Protestant families, and probably little if any greater negative contribution. Indeed, the Catholic families paying $80 or more rent a month, or owning houses of such rental values, are almost reproducing themselves, whereas among the Protestant families paying this rental ten adults are rearing on the average six to seven children.

"To those who prefer to emphasize the cultural heritage, if such it may be called, rather than the biological, it is equally evident that the children of college graduates, or of parents living in the more comfortable and better equipped homes, are generally better prepared to contribute to the welfare of the world than children reared in the slums. In respect to this cultural 'inheritance' it appears that the Catholic families are making also the greater contribution.

"Among the Protestant families paying $40 to $60 a month rent or owning houses of such rental values, ten adults are rearing only five children. And it is among these medium-income families, or a little above medium, that a large proportion of the Protestant church members are found. The implications of such low reproduction rates to the Protestant churches of the city are clear.

Contribution of Migration to Protestant Churches

"The hope for maintenance of membership and strength among the Protestant churches, not only of Indianapolis but also of prac-

tically all other cities in the nation, resides in the migration of youth from the rural areas, which are predominantly Protestant. Several years ago Professor Cameron, of the Butler University School of Religion in Indianapolis, supervised a survey by his students of the churches of the Disciples of Christ in that city. It was found that 74 per cent of the members in the six churches were reared on farms or in rural villages and 76 per cent of the church officers. While attending a meeting of the Indiana Council of Churches in Indianapolis some time ago, held in the First Baptist Church, I picked up a program of the morning service of the previous Sunday and noted the names of the 17 officers of that church. The pastor checked over the list for me and found that 13 of the 17 were reared on farms or in rural villages."

Some Factors Involved in the Declining Birth Rate

Before we consider the economic consequences of the migration of farm youth to the cities I wish to point out that this declining re-

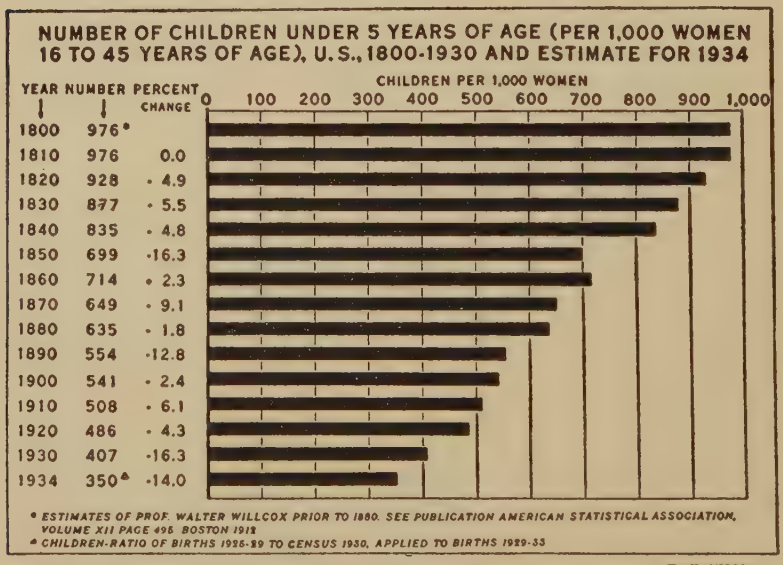


FIGURE 7.—The birth rate, as measured by the ratio of children under 5 to women of childbearing age, has been decreasing in the United States for more than a century. From 1920 to 1930 the decline was over twice as rapid as in most previous decades. The significant fact shown by the graph is that the declining birth rate is a long-time trend, and that the rate of decline has become more rapid in recent years.

production rate is a long-time trend, and that the present stage is not final, nor is the decline confined to the United States. It is characteristic of the entire European sphere of civilization, and was developing in the cities of Japan prior to the war. Secondly, in the United States the decline in the reproduction rate started as long as 140 years ago (see figure 7), and when the decline is mapped by states each census year since it will be seen that the decline started in New England about the year 1800, with the development of the factory system and the growth of cities, and spread from state to state as the cities grew, until by 1930 the lowest reproduction rate in the nation was in California and Oregon. The factors involved in this decreasing birth rate as peoples become urbanized are many, but I believe the following are especially important.

First, in agriculture the family is the economic unit, whereas in industry and commerce the individual tends to be the economic unit. In American agriculture and in that of nearly all other countries, a wife, or at least a family to live with, is almost essential in operating a farm, and children can work and partially pay their way from ten years of age onward. This has been more true in the past than at present, when school takes so large a proportion of children's time to age 14, and frequently to a later age.

In urban occupations, on the other hand, a wife contributes little to the family income, unless she works outside the home, and under such circumstances it is difficult to rear a family. Most children, likewise, contribute little, if any, to the family income in the cities, until they are about ready to start a home of their own. In the unskilled and semiskilled labor groups in the cities, especially in colonies from Europe, the child often starts to work early, as on the farms, and becomes an economic asset. It is in these same groups that the birth rate is highest. In such families there is also probably a greater family unity than in the urban middle-class. But in many families of the professional and upper business classes, children not only must be sent to college, but sometimes need to be supported for a few years afterward. They are commonly an economic liability from birth till marriage. Under such circumstances, and in the absence of a sense of duty to maintain the family line or reproduce the race, it is to be expected that rigid restriction will occur in the size of the family except, as previously noted, among the rich by inheritance.

Second, unlike the farmer, whose productive power is often at a maximum early in life, many persons preparing for or engaging in the professions, and even many who merely complete a college course, have scarcely as large an income during the early years of married life as unskilled laborers. On the other hand, they have been accustomed, in most cases, to the comforts, and often the luxuries, of middle and upper class homes. If parents should continue to contribute to the support of their children for several years after professional education is completed, and particularly after marriage, it would probably have considerable effect in raising the birth rate of this class, where the birth rate is lowest and the children are doubtless especially desirable from the standpoint of the nation and the race. I believe it is desirable to restore the custom of the dowry. Provision of free medical and hospital service by the state, county, or city, particularly in the obstetrical cases, might also exert a little influence on the birth rate.

Third, the earlier and greater decline in the birth rate in the cities, especially among the native-born population, was owing in part, I believe, to the fact that the cost of raising children was greater than on the farms, while the desire for a higher standard of living was stronger. In the cities, as previously noted, all the food has to be bought, and at retail, not farm prices; while the demands as to clothing involve greater expense, and in other ways the desire to reveal one's economic and social status by conspicuous expenditure is stronger. Moreover, the period of education, and consequently of economic dependence on the parents, is more prolonged than in farming regions.

Fourth, communication of information is more rapid in the cities than in rural areas, and this, apparently, has been true with reference to artificial means of birth control. Moreover, there is less traditional and religious resistance to such practices in the cities.

Fifth, a very important reason why there are so few children in the cities is the social ideals of city people. The social ideals at present dictate one or two, sometimes three, children to a family and no more. A mother of four or five children is likely to be commiserated by her friends on her misfortune. These social ideals have been as important a factor, possibly, as economic pressure in causing the declining birth rate. It is significant that in China, even among the upper classes, where scientific knowledge as well as the

Occidental commercial system has permeated to a considerable extent, there has been little, if any, decline as yet in the birth rate, apparently because of persistent adhere to their religious beliefs and family ideals, such as the respect for and worship of ancestors.

Only a generation or two ago similar religious beliefs and family ideals, the outgrowth of the long experience of the race, exerted an influence in the Occident also. Those days seem to have passed away, at least among many urban people of Protestant ancestry, and different attitudes toward life, and toward its opportunities and duties, have developed. The Catholic Church has remained firm in its opposition to artificial means of birth control; but its attitude, which undoubtedly exerted a strong influence in the past, is apparently insufficient to stem the tide in North America as well as in northwestern Europe. The few studies that have have been made indicate as rapid a percentage decline at present in number of births among Catholics as among Protestants, but from a higher base. In Quebec, for example, a dominantly Catholic province, the birth rate, though much higher, is declining, apparently, as rapidly as in Ontario, a dominantly Protestant province. The crude birth rate in Quebec declined from 37.6 per thousand population in 1921 to 29.1 in1931 and to 24.3 in 1936. In Ontario, the corresponding figures are 25.3, 20.2 and 16.9.

Associated with religion, particularly among rural people, is an organic philosophy. The farmer tends to think in terms of plants and animals, of birth and growth and death. The city man, on the other hand, tends to think in terms of wheels and levers and machines, or of buying and selling. Whereas agriculture is founded on life processes, particularly as influenced by soil and weather and the laws of heredity, urban occupations are founded on manufacturing and commerce, and the activities are mostly carried on indoors. To the city child milk is associated with a bottle, not with a cow; an apple comes from a box, not from a tree; and these early impressions influence, I believe, the ideas of later life.

As a consequence the farmer's philosophy of life is primarily familistic, whereas the city man's philosophy usually is mechanistic. The farmer lives in a natural world; the city man in an artificial world. Because of his occupation the farmer's thoughts are largely biological, whereas the city man's thoughts are largely physical or economic. In farming the family is the economic as well as the

social unit, as previously noted. In the city, on the other hand, the individual is the economic unit.

Perhaps because of the open air, and the contact with nature, perhaps because the farmer sees the stars at night and observes the progress of the seasons, perhaps also because of stronger family ties, farmers and farm women tend to think of the past and the future; city people, it seems to me, tend to think more about the present. Thrift has been called into question by many city people today; the work day, it is urged, should be shortened to six hours so that everyone will be employed, and children by some are considered a luxury to be indulged in only by people of ample means. Granting that thrift may be carried too far, that all should work who are able, and that parents should feel a keen sense of responsibility in bringing children into the world, the fact remains that the materialistic philosophy of life with its emphasis on the present, which is popular in the cities today, leads to the disintegration of the family and to national and social decay.

There is a sixth factor allied to that of social ideals that helps, I believe, to account for this difference in the birth rate. The virtues that have been esteemed through the ages—thrift, frugality, diligence, hard work, honesty—have been found essential to adequate agricultural production. These are production virtues which the farmer's wife and the children, as well as the farmer, see the necessity of. They see that they must work hard and save if they are to have a better house or barn, or buy a better bull. They know also that they must save in order to own the farm when old age approaches. In addition, there is the desire to give the children a better start in life than the parents enjoyed. Historically this is one of the great motive forces promoting the accumulation of wealth.

In the cities, on the other hand, the need for thrift and the accumulation of capital is less evident, and the risk of loss is greater than in rural areas. Most of the men in the cities work for wages, and the family generally lives in a rented house. The mother, unless she works outside the home, is not engaged in the production of goods, and the children seldom have work to do, except to go to school. The need to accumulate capital is not obvious—this is done mostly by corporations and by the rich. Indeed, a family's social position depends more on what they spend than on what they possess. Extravagance suggests a large income, and income is a

major measure of success. A social code develops characterized by conspicuous consumption. Consumption virtues are replacing production virtues. And seeking of recognition through consumption is not conducive to a large family.

The Future Citizens of the Nation

Professor Rockwell Smith of Garrett Biblical Institute has made a splendid study of church membership classified by five year age groups in certain cities and rural areas in Wisconsin. He found that for the First Methodist Church in Madison the number of children under five years of age in the church "population" will provide about 50 years hence less than one-sixth as many members 45-54 years of age as were in the church in 1939. Apparently the church accessions from outside begin with youth in the early teens and include more females than males in every age group. By contrast, in the rural churches of the Madison-Platteville district he found that there are enough children to maintain the membership of these churches stationary, were there no migration of youth from the rural areas. But there is little, if any, surplus. In other words, assuming no conversions, there are probably not enough Methodist children, urban and rural, in the Madison-Platteville district to maintain the present membership of the Methodist churches; also, the more the church becomes urban, the more rapidly will its membership tend to decline in number.

Considering again the nation as a whole, the Protestant churches are fortunate in having a great hinterland of human resources in the rural South. Already, the Southern states, with only one-fourth the nation's population, contribute about one-half of the excess of births over deaths; and practically all this excess is in the rural areas, the cities of the South having as low a birthrate as those in the North. As the people in the cities grow older, and in the rural areas also, and deaths increase, it appears inevitable that the churches of the nation will become increasingly dependent for maintenance of membership upon the people of the rural South.

A century hence, should present differences in birth rates persist, about three-quarters of the nation's population will be descendants of the rural people of today, mostly of the poor but proud and generally capable people of the southern Appalachian Mountains, of the croppers and tenants of the Cotton Belt, of the hill folk that

live along the Ohio River and its tributaries, of the Catholic farmers of Maryland and North Dakota, of the Mennonites scattered in groups in Pennsylvania, Virginia, Ohio, Indiana and Kansas; of the Mormons of Utah and Idaho, and of other humble peoples who, because of their geographic isolation or religious traditions, have been more or less protected from the influence of modern urban culture. In these peoples lies the principal hope of the Christian Church in the future; indeed, of the nation also.

Migration of Youth from the Farms and Transmission of Wealth from Generation to Generation

During the decade 1920-29 (years of urban prosperity), over 19,000,000 people left farms, according to estimates of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, nearly all youth, for middle-aged and old farmers find it difficult to change to other occupations. About 13,000,000 returned to farms, doubtless many disillusioned. These figures indicate a net migration of 6,300,000. During the next decade, 1930-39, depression years mostly, some 14,000,000 left the farms and 10,700,000 returned to farms, indicating a net migration of about 3,300,000. But from January 1, 1940 to January 1, 1944 (war years), the net migration from farms is estimated by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics at 6,200,000. (By now it is fully a million more). Thus a greater net movement occurred in those four years than in the preceding ten years, and about the same as in the decade, 1920-29. A checkup of youth survey records in several Corn Belt counties indicates that at least three-fourths of the males 18 to 28 years of age (the ages covered in most youth surveys) had left the farms during these four years. The total farm population of the nation has fallen since 1940 by 5,000,000, which is one-sixth.

If this migration of youth proves permanent (and probably most of these young people will remain in the cities or return to the cities after a period of unemployment) it will involve a vast drift of wealth from the farms. About 10 years ago we made an estimate that the cost of rearing and educating a child on the farms of the nation during the normal decade 1920-29 was about $150 a year. It appeared that the cost of food, clothing, and such medical services as farm children receive, was about $110 a year, while education cost the community $40 more. Assuming that the child

becomes self-supporting at age 15, we reached the conclusion that $2,000 could be accepted as a minimum estimate of the average cost to the farming people of raising and educating the young man or woman who left for the cities. During that decade 1920-30, the net migration from farms was about 6,300,000. Multiplying this number by $2,000 gives a rough estimate of $12,600,000,000 as the contribution which the farming people made in this way to the progress and prosperity of the non-farming people, mostly city people, during that decade. Assuming the same cost per youth since 1940 the 5,000,000 net migration since January 1 of that year likewise indicates a cost of over 12 billion dollars.

Nor is this all: When the father and mother die the estate is usually divided more or less equally among the children. During the decade 1920-30, about one-sixth of the farmers died (the proportion is now probably one-fifth) and the boy or girl who stayed on the farm, or some stranger who bought it, was compelled in most cases to pay the heirs in the city their shares of the estate. Undoubtedly, this generally resulted in mortgaging the farm. As near as we could estimate, some three or four billion dollars was thus transferred from the farms to the cities during that decade prior to the depression through the settlements of estates. Three billion dollars seems a modest estimate of the ultimate loss to the farming people during the past five years from this cause. Interest on this mortgage debt is a heavy burden on the farming people. It is now about twice as large as about 30 years ago, despite a notable lowering in the interest rate, and amounts to about 400 million dollars a year. This is a small figure compared with the cost of migrating youth, but its magnitude can be appreciated better by telling you that it would be sufficient to put a modern bathroom and kitchen in every farm house in the country in five or six years. It would build a good new farm house for every young couple that started farming. How much of this interest payment arises from the settlement of estates cannot be estimated with confidence, but it is undoubtedly a very large proportion of the total.

Sometimes all the children leave the farm, and on the death of the parents the farm is rented or is sold. During the decade before the depression the total rental payment of farmers to non-farmers amounted to about 11 billion dollars. Here again it is impossible to estimate with confidence how much of this vast amount

arises from the migration of farm youth to the cities. But it is undoubtedly a large proportion. After making a reasonable allowance for state aid to rural schools, the remittances of children to parents living on farms, and other similar payments made by non-farm to farm people, it would appear that 20 billion dollars net, or two billion dollars a year, is not an excessive estimate of the ultimate contribution associated with migration which the farm people have made to the non-farm areas during the years 1920-29. It may be much larger for the years 1940-44.

In this connection I should like to summarize some calculations recently made by Mr. Eugene Merritt of the Federal Agricultural Extension Service, who is primarily interested in the problems of older farm youth. He divides the six billion farms reporting the value of farm products in the 1930 and again in the 1940 census into three groups. Group A, which contains nearly half of all farms, includes those which produced less than $1,000 of products in 1929, and less than $600 in 1930. Group B, which includes about 30 per cent of all the farms, consists of those that produced from $1,000 to $2,500 worth of products in 1929, and from $600 to $1,500 worth in 1939. Group C includes the remaining 20 per cent of the farms. The lower prices for farm products in 1939 only partly explain the lower income classes included in each group in this year. Now group A had sales of farm products in 1929 that amounted to 10.8 per cent of the sales from all farms, and 6.9 per cent in 1939. The sales of farm products from group B constituted 27.6 per cent of the sales from all farms in 1929 and 19.4 per cent in 1939. The sales of farm products from group C constituted 61.5 per cent in 1929 and 72.7 per cent in 1939. (However, it should be noted that group C included only 19.2 per cent of all farms in 1929 and 23.9 per cent in 1939). Assuming that the migration from these three groups of farms is in proportion to the number of farms (it was undoubtedly much heavier from the poorer farms), and assuming further that the income per migrant from each group is the same after they reach the cities, namely, $1,000 per worker, which is about the national non-farm average, Mr. Merritt reaches the interesting conclusion that the value of the migrants from group A during the decade before the depression was fully five times the value of farm products sold, and that during the decade 1930-40, when farm products were low in price, the value of these migrating

youth constituted a still larger proportion. In other words, the major contribution to the national welfare of the less productive half of our farms, consists of youth, rather than food and fibers.

The farming people face a dilemma. If they continue to produce a surplus of youth who migrate to the cities, this drift of wealth will continue. If, on the other hand, the birth rate in the rural areas falls to a point only sufficient to maintain the farm population, and our youth surveys in the Corn Belt indicate that it has already fallen to this point among many of the oncoming generation in this region, the cities will before long decline in population, with a correlated decline in demand for farm products, unless consumption per capita should increase. Such increase in consumption per capita is very desirable and may occur, for the Consumers Purchase Survey indicates that one-third of our city people did not have sufficient income in 1936 to buy enough milk, meat, eggs, and green vegetables —the expensive foods which carry the necessary proteins, vitamins and minerals—to maintain good health and full efficiency.

Migration of Youth from Farms and Tenancy

The obvious, but almost wholly ignored, relationship between the migration of youth from farms to cities and the increase of tenancy on farms was first called to my attention by an aged Presbyterian minister in South Carolina. One of the offiicals of the Columbia Land Bank, after hearing me speak at an Extension conference, offered to drive me out to his boyhood community, some 60 miles east of Columbia, and visit the four churches which this aged pastor had built during 36 years of labor. I found those churches to be beautiful structures exceeding in size and architectural achievement most churches in southern county seats. I congratulated the aged pastor on his achievement, and he replied in words to this effect:

"Yes, the Lord has been gracious to us; but, looking to the future, the prospect is rather dark for the Christian church in this community and communities like it."

I inquired why he thought so, and he replied in words about as follows:

"If you will look around you (something too few of us do), you will see that most of the farms in this community are only large enough to support one family—40 to 60 acres with a little cotton

and tobacco to sell for cash, with which to pay taxes and buy gasoline, sugar, and coffee; ten to twenty acres of corn to feed a few hogs and a couple of cows; a garden and a number of fruit trees."

Then he continued: "I have observed that the sons are born when the fathers are about 30 years of age, that is, about as many children are born before the father is 30 as after he is 30. Twenty to 25 years later the son wants to marry and have a home of his own. But the farm will not support two families and the father is only 50 to 55 years of age. He has not saved enough on which to retire and he is not ready to die. Seldom also has he saved enough to buy a farm for the son. There remains nothing, therefore, for the son to do but to go to town and get a job. The daughter does likewise. Indeed (and he is correct), the daughter leaves for the cities about two years younger than the sons. Some 15 to 25 years later the parents die, but by this time the son is established in some city business or occupation and the daughter has married a city man. They are no longer interested in returning to the farm to live. So one of two things happens, either they rent the farm or they sell it. If they rent the farm, generally about half the income is sent to the cities in payment of the rent. If they sell the farm there are no young men in the community with means to buy, and very few older farmers have saved enough to purchase a second farm for their son. So the farm is generally sold to a city man as an investment, and he in turn rents it. Now when half the income from those little farms leaves the community as rent, there is not enough left to support a church."

Our youth surveys in the Corn Belt and elsewhere suggest strongly that this Presbyterian pastor had clearly seen the major factor causing the increase of tenancy in the United States. Generally two-thirds and sometimes three-fourths of all the farms have no youth or younger children living on them. The younger generation has left the farm, leaving the middle-aged or old husband and wife to till the farm alone. This situation is more or less inevitable because the farm is only large enough to support one family according to the customary level of living in the community.

Father and Son Partnership

One of the solutions to this problem is for the father to take the son into partnership and increase the size of the farm accord-

ingly, either by expansion of acreage or a shift in the type of farming. This solution was becoming common in the Corn Belt and the Spring Wheat Regions, also to a less extent in the Cotton Belt, before the War preparation altered the entire situation. The rapid spread of the idea is attributable primarily to two factors: (1) The economic depression, which prevented the youth from obtaining employment in the towns and cities, and (2) the rubber-tired tractor. Unable to obtain employment the young men were backed up on the farms. As time passed many of these youth wished to be married and have their own home. But most of the farms were only large enough to support one family. If the father possessed the capital or credit he rented another farm. Before the coming of the rubber-tired tractor it would have been necessary for him to rent nearby, which was often impossible to do. The rubber-tired tractor permitted renting farms as far distant as five and even ten miles. Quite commonly, one other farm, if it were fairly large, would permit the partnership to support two families. But also quite commonly another farm was not sufficient to utilize effectively the tractor and associated implements. So, frequently a second, third, and even fourth farm was rented. One day, while working with the young men on the survey in Blackford County, Indiana, I took the record on a partnership of a father and three sons who were operating 2,100 acres of land, mostly in crops. In this case there were three hired men in addition. But the hired man has disappeared from most of the farms in the Corn Belt. In Blackford County with its 1,200 farms we found only 50 hired men. The son was taking the place of the hired man, and he was, moreover, sharing the management of the large farm with his father.

The son was also taking the place of the tenant. Most of these farms that had been rented by father and son partnerships were previously operated by tenants. A responsible farmer with an ambitious son and a brand new tractor outfit obviously had an advantage over the poorer tenants in particular, who are handicapped by lack of efficient equipment. Some of the farms rented by these father and son partnerships were those that had been previously operated by elderly farmers. Those farmers and their wives continued to live in the farm house and usually reserved the garden and a small pasture for a cow or two; while renting the fields to one or two farmers, generally father and son partnerships. These

operating farmers necessarily carried the grain and hay to their own farms where the stock was located. Clearly this practice tended to deplete the fertility of the rented land. At other times the father and son partnerships rented the 40 to 80 acre holdings of part-time farmers who worked in some nearby city and needed only three or four acres for a garden, chickens, and a cow that they commonly kept. They had purchased the 40 or 80 acres, apparently, to give them a feeling of economic security.

The schedule form used did not include questions as to what happened to the tenants who had been dispossessed by the expanding operations of the farmers. But two young members of the Country Life Club in Blackford County, Indiana, collected data in one township for us. Two such tenants had risen to ownership during the last five years, three moved to larger tenant farms, five had obtained other farms of about the same size, three had become day laborers in the country, with an income probably only half that of the average tenant, and five had gone to town. Several of these, it was reported, were on relief. Eight apparently rose in economic status, five remained stationary, and eight probably declined in status.

The Family and Transmission of Culture from Generation to Generation

A major result of the culture of a people is the character of the individual. In the development of character the family is undoubtedly the dominant force. Some years ago the Institute of Social and Religious Research undertook the difficult task of studying the influences that were most important in the formation of character among young people. Some 2,000 youth, as I recall, were studied, information about them and their background being obtained from relatives and friends and recorded on schedules by highly trained sociologists. The results were published in three volumes, edited by Hartshorne and May, of Columbia University. These were intricate statistical studies, which I summarized in my memory as follows:

If all the factors that influenced the character of these young young people be totaled as 100 per cent, the school had exerted eight per cent, and most of this influence was owing to a few outstanding teachers. The influence of the church likewise was 8 per-

cent, but the Sunday school apparently has exerted no clear influence. When one recalls that the Sunday school holds the child's attention for only one hour or so out of 80 or 100 waking hours in the week, while many of the teachers are inexperienced and some lack inspiration, this result is more readily understood. Friends accounted for several per cent more—I do not remember the figure. But I do recall that the family exerted a greater influence than all other factors combined—over 60 per cent; and in the family the mother exerted about twice the influence of the father. The child is with the mother most of the time until six years of age, and these are the years when character is formed very largely. She teaches by example as well as by precept. Probably on the farm the influence of the father is greater than in the city, where he is generally away from home most of the day.

The implications of this study are profound and help one to understand the things that are happening today in urban culture, and may happen in rural culture tomorrow. Many women have lost their bearings, some even that fundamental instinct to establish a family and reproduce the race. Sentiment and spiritual ideals and attitudes give place to materialistic values. Not production, but consumption becomes the criterion of success—conspicuous consumption as Veblen, a great economist, called it. The largest salaries go to salesmen and the principal income of newspapers and magazines, the great vehicles of popular education, is derived from advertisements, many of questionable values. All the knowledge and skills of psychology are prostituted to the purpose of persuading people to buy things and more things, and the possession of these things, mostly transitory, brings prestige. If one-half the money that is spent on advertising intoxicating liquors and cigarettes were devoted to the promotion and protection of the family, and in giving glamour to a good mother and father and faithful child, what a different world it would be!

If I were sure that state socialism would not weaken the institution of the family, and would respect the Christian belief in the infinite worth of the human soul—out of which belief have grown freedom and democracy and science—I would hasten to accept it in order to avoid the evils arising out of the overemphasis on materialistic values apparently inevitable in our present competitive economic system. I believe the cooperative system will avoid these

evils in large measure, as well as the dangers of state socialism. I hope the cooperative economic system will grow rapidly, and that with it will grow the spirit of service, thrift, work; in brief, an emphasis on production rather than consumption.

Since women buy probably three-fourths of the goods that are made, it appears that the attitude of the mother as she teaches her child by precept and example may exert a determining influence upon the future economic development of the world. What will she buy? Where will she buy it? How will she use it? Woman is the great conserver or destroyer of culture; upon her rests the major responsibility, in my opinion, of determining whether our civilization will decline, as have all civilizations in the past, except, possibly the Chinese, or will rise to greater heights.

Post-Script

I left the Conference apprehensive that the Mennonite people must suffer much more than they have suffered before their leaders will endeavor to row in real earnest against the stream of events on which they and their followers are drifting toward the whirlpool of urbanism and individualism ("free enterprise" and much "free love", in brief irresponsibility), then national socialism, inevitably associated with totalitarianism and militarism—which means oblivion for the non-conformist groups and many others, as in Germany during the past decade.

But I have confidence that a "remnant" will remain true to the faith of their fathers, and, uniting their efforts with those of "remnants" from other churches will begin building a new civilization in which the emphasis will be on peace rather than war; on production instead of consumption; on economic cooperation more than on competition; on family integrity, loyalty and continuity; on survival more than on "success," and, above all, on the infinite worth and dignity of the human soul as expressed in the prayer to "Our Father." These leaders of the new church will again pray; "Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

AN ECONOMIC PROGRAM FOR THE MENNONITE COMMUNITY OF TOMORROW

Carl Kreider

The Place of Economic Considerations in the Mennonite Way of Life

The fundamental work of the Church is the propagation of the Gospel. Jesus came into the world to change the hearts and lives of men by His exemplary living and teaching, and by His atoning death on the cross. The Mennonite Church is composed of individuals whom Christ has redeemed from sin. As followers of Christ and beneficiaries of His grace, our foremost concern should be to lead others to Christ in order that all might enjoy the great salvation so freely offered to us.

The Church, however, is more than an organized missionary society, invaluable though that aspect of its work should be. The Church also represents a community of believers. Some of the members of this community spend their entire time propagating the gospel. The great majority of them, however, though vitally interested in the extension of the Kingdom of God, must perforce spend the bulk of their time in secular activities. In the pursuit of these activities the Christian faces the highly practical question of how he can best reflect the life of Christ in his own daily contacts with his fellowmen. The only excuse, therefore, for outlining an economic program for the Mennonite Church of tomorrow is that it affords an opportunity to study the practical applications of the teachings of the Master with respect to affairs which are a daily concern of all.

This background should make it clear from the outset that economic considerations are not the most important concern of the Mennonites in developing a way of life. It is submitted, however, that economic factors exert a pronounced influence on the lives and witness of members of the Mennonite community in the following respects:

1. After engaging in the economic activity, how much time is available for communion with God, for Bible study, and for inner spiritual growth? Does the economic activity leave the individual in

a state of semi-consciousness when the day's work is done? Or does it afford him time to creep away from the toils and cares of the day? Do the six days of labor decreed by our Maker involve such arduous and time-consuming tasks that the seventh day reserved for God becomes a meaningless interruption in the flow of unceasing toil?

2. Do our economic activities make for heterogeneity or homogeneity within the social group? Closely related to this question is the question of the general desirability of the pursuit of social cohesion. To what extent should efforts be made to attain this end? Another closely related question is whether homogeneity can be achieved by other means, in spite of a wide diversity of economic activities in the group.

3. The most important question of all, however, is the question of the impact of economic activities on the total personality. How well do these activities prepare the personality for Christian service? It is obvious that certain types of economic activity are injurious in this respect. Certainly Mennonites would be very inconsistent to engage in lines of business which produce products or resort to practices which tend to weaken or destroy the soul, the mind, or the body. This question, however, has still other implications, some of which go considerably deeper than the obvious one already mentioned. If the Mennonite community is solely a rural community engaged in agricultural enterprises, what effect will this have upon the possibility of members of that community engaging in evangelistic efforts among urban laboring groups? Perhaps of still greater significance along this line is the relationship between the method of making a living and the social ideals of the group. Does the group tend to develop a feeling that social problems which apparently have been an inevitable development of urbanization and industrialization are fundamentally the responsibility of the individual, or are they a natural outgrowth of the society in which he lives? For example, does a rural society of small land owners tend to regard industrial unemployment during a period of acute economic depression as primarily a result of indolence on the part of the urban laborer thrown out of a job, or as a by-product of an economic system over which the individual worker has relatively little control? The answer to these questions is certainly a legitimate concern of every thoughtful member of the Mennonite community.

The Place of Agriculture in the Mennonite Community of Tomorrow

In the United States the great majority of Mennonites have been farmers. The students coming to Goshen College probably do not constitute an accurate cross-section of the larger Mennonite community, but it is highly unlikely that they are more rural than the Mennonite Church at large. Regularly, more Goshen College freshmen report farming as the occupation of their father than all of the other occupations combined. Since about twenty-five per cent of the student body is non-Mennonite, and since the non-Mennonite element comes primarily from the city of Goshen, it is probable that the proportion of Mennonite students having an agricultural background is larger than of the student body generally. Figures for the percentage of Mennonites engaged in agricultural pursuits in former generations are not available. It is a safe assumption, however, that although from the beginning a few Mennonites lived in urban communities, the great majority were farmers.

From the beginning of our country urbanization of the American population has been a steady development. According to figures of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics of the United States Department of Agriculture, up to 1820, ninety per cent of the total working population of our country was engaged in agriculture. Because of the industrialization which followed the Civil War, this figure had fallen to 42 per cent in 1900, and to 20 per cent in 1930. No further decline took place between 1930 and 1940, the first decade in the history of the country which registered no decline. What the corresponding figures are for the Mennonite population it is of course impossible to say. Although it is clear that the trend toward urbanization among the Mennonites has been much slower than among the population generally, it is equally obvious that some trend toward urbanization has taken place. From these facts it is apparent that one of the most important questions to ask concerning an economic program for the Mennonite community of tomorrow relates to the part that agriculture should play in that economy. Is it desirable to make efforts to arrest the trend toward urbanization, to stimulate the trend, or to reverse it? It is the thesis of this paper that certain technological changes within agriculture make it wellnigh impossible to reverse the trend and that in consequence a desirable economic program for the Men-

nonite Church of tomorrow, though resting on a strong agricultural base, will also contain significant elements of diversification. In this section of the paper reasons for the decline in agriculture will be summarized and suggestions for strengthening agriculture in the Mennonite community will be made. In the final section means of diversification will be noted.

Agriculture is a declining industry in the United States for the following major reasons: (1) foreign demand has decreased because there has been a decline in agricultural exports caused by increased foreign competition; (2) the former great expansion of domestic demands has been curbed by a declining rate of population growth in the United States; and (3) certain technological changes have reduced the domestic demands for agricultural products. These three points will now be examined briefly in turn.

The decrease in agricultural exports can be seen from the following figures which compare exports during a four-year period prior to World War I with recent years.

	1910-14 (Average)	1934	1938
Wheat	156 million bu.	22 million bu.	116 million bu.
Cotton	9 million bales	5 million bales	4 million bales
Hogs and lard	941 million lbs.	355 million lbs.	350 million lbs.

From these figures it is apparent that wheat exports have fallen by nearly thirty per cent, whereas cotton exports have been more than halved, and hogs and lard have fallen to only about one-third of their former figure. Although World War I temporarily stimulated exports of farm products, its aftermath probably was one of the most important factors contributing to the decline. In the first place, the war not only caused a great increase in agricultural production in the United States, but also caused many new areas of the world, such as Argentina, Australia, and Canada, to produce on an increased scale. These countries had cheap land, they were well adapted to the use of large scale machinery, and cheap ocean freights made it possible for them to supply Europe at a minimum price. In the second place, the war brought home to Europeans the danger of depending on overseas supplies in a period of world struggle. Consequently, after the war practically all countries of Europe literally "beat their swords into ploughshares" and set

about to produce, as nearly as possible, all of their food and feed requirements within their own borders. Local farmers were paid wheat prices of anywhere from $1.30 per bushel in Great Britain to over $2.00 in Germany and Italy, and high tariffs kept out the American product. In the third place, many of the militaristic governments of Europe viewed the large families of farm homes as desirable "cannon fodder" for a future war. Although all of these factors are temporarily held in abeyance by the present war in Europe, it is likely that they will work with increased fury in the years following this war—a war which in general will produce much more sweeping changes than the last.

At the same time that the American farmer was losing a substantial part of his foreign market, domestic demand started tapering off because of a declining rate of population growth. The birth rate in the United States fell from 55 per 1,000 per year in 1800 to about 18 in 1940. Although the rate rose by nearly thirty per cent in the first two years of American participation in the current war, it is again falling. Immigration which in some years prior to the first World War brought to our shores more than a million new consumers of farm products annually, was greatly restricted by legislation in 1921 and 1924. During the depression years of the 1930's more people left the United States than were admitted. Thus this important factor increasing the demand for agricultural products is no longer operative. Where the demand for a product is elastic, the effects of a static population may be compensated by an increased national income. It is probable, however, that the demand for agricultural products is relatively inelastic and therefore an increased income will have a lesser effect.

Certain recent technological changes have also contributed to the decline of agriculture. It is estimated that there were 26 million horses and mules on American farms in 1920; today there are only 16 million. Some 35 million acres of farm land formerly utilized to grow feed for these animals is therefore no longer needed. The development of synthetic fabrics has already made great inroads on the demand for cotton and linen, and discoveries which have proceeded apace before and during the present war will in all likelihood reduce the demand for these fabrics, as well as wool, in the post-war period. It is possible, of course, that technological changes of the future may stimulate the demand for farm products, but the net effect of recent changes has been in the opposite direction.

Even if agriculture were a rapidly expanding industry, however, there are several reasons for questioning the economic desirability of resting the Mennonite community of tomorrow solely on an agrarian base. Farm enthusiasts have written much of late concerning the economic security that comes from farming. Much of what is written is true but there seems to be a tendency to exaggerate the truth by citing chiefly war-time figures to prove the case. Depression figures for 1932-35 do not paint such a pleasant picture. These great fluctuations in the prosperity of farmers are another outgrowth of war and its aftermath. They are also caused by the highly competitive character of farming and by certain inherent features of agriculture which lead to income instability.

Economists have usually pointed to farming as perhaps our best example of a freely competitive industry. The number of individual producers is so large that the individual action of any one producer has no appreciable influence on the market. When, however, most producers reason in this way, and therefore unwittingly act in concert, their combined action does have a pronounced influence on the market.

Of even more significance is the apparent inherent instability of farm income. Whereas per capita non-farm income has been nearly twice as high at its highest point during the last thirty years as at its lowest point, per capita farm income was six times as high at its highest as at its lowest. In other words the fluctuations in farm income were three times as great as those of non-farm income. There are several reasons for this. In the first place, the basic trouble lies in the fact that present day agriculture is increasingly becoming an industry of high fixed costs. The implications of this fact will be noted in more detail in a moment. In the second place, adjustments of farm production to changed demand situations take place slowly, whereas industrial production adjustments take place very rapidly. Thus, whereas agricultural production had fluctuated only twenty-six per cent during the twenty years prior to the present war, industrial production fluctuated eighty-seven per cent in the same period. On the other hand, agricultural prices fluctuated by one hundred ten per cent, whereas industrial prices fluctuated sixty-five per cent. The reasons for this are not hard to find. When an industrialist starts losing money he either curtails production sharply or goes out of business entirely. When a farmer

loses money he is much more likely to try to expand his production the following year in order to pay his debts, even though such actions on the part of a significant number of farmers may cause an expansion of total production which in turn would cause a further decline in prices and further losses, thus in the final analysis producing the very thing the farmer was desperately trying to avoid. In the third place, the farmer is a producer of raw materials. The prices of such commodities are the first to be affected when a general price decline occurs, and the price fluctuations are more violent.

This discussion may appear to paint a picture, for the future of farming, so black as to suggest that Mennonites would do best to leave the farm entirely. Such a suggestion is by no means intended. It is given primarily to demonstrate the desirability of some diversification of the economy of the Mennonite community, and to point up the need for some careful thinking of ways to strengthen the farming community. Farming affords non-economic values which may in the long run have vastly more significance than its transitory economic disadvantages. The farm and community schools which have been established in C.P.S. camps, rural life conferences, and the work of men like Dr. O. E. Baker, as well as an increasing number of Mennonite leaders, all have rendered a considerable service in pointing to non-economic values of farming such as the strengthening of church and home ties and the fostering of a strong democratic spirit. Mennonite leaders know that their members have often changed not only their economic life, but their religious and social life as well, when they left the farm. Therefore, leaving the matter of diversification until a moment later, let us pause here to cite some possible ways of strengthening Mennonite agriculture.

In the first place, attention should be directed toward increasing the ownership of debt-free farms. One of the basic reasons for the instability of farm income noted above is the presence of high fixed costs. Modern agriculture is to a large extent mechanized—and this involves heavy long term investment. Land and buildings are more expensive than formerly, thus adding still further to the requisite investment. In this situation many farmers are tempted to go heavily into debt, and although service charges are easily met during periods of high prices, they may impose an impossible burden of fixed costs in a period of depression. The solution to this problem

does not lie in tenancy, for tenancy does not make for stability of the farming community, nor does a cash rent tenancy system reduce fixed costs. No easy solution is possible, but a frank recognition of the serious nature of the problem is certainly the first step. Community action and co-operation can promote a healthy attitude among community members against bidding up land values and incurring heavy investments which may later prove to have been unwise. Recently in one Mennonite community, for example, a relatively poor member carefully saved money over a period of years to buy a particular farm, only to find after making final arrangements that a wealthy member of the same church who already owned three farms of his own, had outbid him. This type of experience has doubtless been duplicated elsewhere.

In the second place, opportunity should be afforded for study and discussion of farm problems as an integral part of Mennonite rural community life. Returned men from Soil Conservation C.P.S. camps should form a helpful nucleus for study of methods of effective soil conservation practices. Production policy should be discussed in the light of current information constantly made available by the United States Department of Agriculture. Improved farm methods should be the study of all members of the Mennonite community, collectively as well as individually. The devices noted above have long been part of the program of organizations such as Granges and Farm Bureaus. In general Mennonites have avoided such organizations because of lack of sympathy with many of their social practices. In other words, Mennonites have felt that the doctrine of the unequal yoke applies here as well as in other aspects of living. The educational and economic values of these organizations, however, are clear, provided they are undiluted with undesirable social practices. It would appear that the time is here when the Church should consider the establishment of Mennonite organizations of this kind. Comparable things have been done by the Church in the past along other lines and the success of the ventures is widely recognized. For example, when it was discovered that many Mennonite young people left the Church after going to non-Mennonite schools of higher education, the Mennonite answer was colleges of their own. In ventures of this kind, the temptation toward smugness can and has been avoided by freely admitting outsiders while maintaining control in the hands of the Church.

In the third place, the Mennonite community should make a concerted effort to keep its young people, if not actually on farms, at least within the rural community. This can be accomplished successfully only after a careful study is made of the major reasons young people are tempted to move to the city. Until that exhaustive study is made the following suggestions may be made for caring for three reasons which are doubtless operative in most of the cases. In the first place, the city affords many recreational possibilities that are not freely available to rural folk. For entirely too long a period of time Mennonite communities have been content to take the negative attitude of prohibiting participation in such activities without accompanying the prohibition with a positive program of bringing satisfying recreational opportunities to our own people. Surely a first step in making rural life attractive is an adequate recreational program for our young people. In the second place, our young people do not have the funds required to establish themselves in farming. It seems to me that there are two answers to this problem: (1) a diversified economic program affording ample opportunities for some lines of economic activity which do not require a large investment, and (2) a program of financial aid to promising young people who lack the necessary capital. There is a long tradition that a mortgage loan should bear an interest rate of at least six per cent. When unable to make farm loans of this kind, many wealthy Mennonite farmers have attempted to earn still larger returns through "investment" in speculative securities. This, in turn, has not infrequently resulted in a complete loss, not only of interest but of principal as well. How much better it would have been if investments in Mennonite community building had been made where the risks were spread over a number of investors, through a system of mutual aid, even if the interest return did not exceed two or three per cent. In the third place, the city of recent years has afforded numerous opportunities for social security which are not available to country folk who have the status of farm laborers. Here again, the answer must be mutual aid. Are mutual aid and helpfulness, things which Mennonites have been famous for for generations, going to be continued and adapted to new needs, or are they going to be abandoned, thus adding further to the problems of rural life? In particular, if the suggested diversification of economic life within the rural community outlined below is

adopted, the adaptation of mutual aid principles to hospitalization and medical aid plans should be carefully studied. If it is sound practice for Amish farmers to pool their efforts in rebuilding a barn destroyed by fire or storm, it should also be desirable for Mennonites to share the cost of unusually expensive hospital or doctor bills. Such bills are regularly higher today than they were a generation ago, and it is therefore more difficult to meet them as an ordinary expense.

A Diversified Economic Program for the Mennonite Community of Tomorrow

Thus far this paper has attempted to establish two facts: (1) that effort should be taken to revitalize agriculture in the Mennonite community, and (2) that economic and social forces are operating which make it undesirable to base Mennonite community life exclusively upon an agrarian economy. There remains to be pointed out certain lines which diversification might take.

The first step in planning a diversified program would consist in taking a careful inventory of the economic needs and potentialities of the area where the Mennonites live. Successful farmers and business men from the church at large might well offer to give of their time and talents to the success of such a survey but it will also require the sympathetic co-operation and counsel of lifetime residents of the community in question. The survey should include a careful study of the present economic activities and a careful appraisal of future possibilities for diversification. What are the main products purchased from the outside? Can these products be produced locally to an advantage? The decision here should be made not upon the basis of emotion, but of careful study from statistics which are already available, from organizations such as the Federal Trade Commission, on the relative efficiency within given industries of large, medium and small sized firms. In making the survey it is suggested that at least the following three principles be used as guides. First, are the proposed industries or economic activities consistent with Mennonite ideals? It is assumed that this point is so generally recognized as fundamental as to make further elucidation unnecessary. Second, does the plan attempt to canalize all members of the community into one type of economic activity or does it allow ample opportunity for varying gifts and

talents? Obviously, the main arguments against a purely agricultural community can also be advanced against a community that is unbalanced industrially. Third, is the program sound from an economic standpoint? Certainly, the community would have much to lose from hastily constructed ill-advised programs. Let it be emphasized again that a satisfactory program will be one that is adapted to the needs of the community. Some general suggestions, however, can be made. In addition to a strong agricultural base, the community might have some of the following four types of economic activity: (1) the first processing of agricultural products, particularly of perishable goods, (2) certain service trades, (3) small industries producing specialized products for an outside market, and (4) retail outlets. These four types will now be discussed briefly in turn.

Creameries, cheese factories, and feed mills might be possible examples of industries devoted to the processing of agricultural products. Such industries are operated in many rural communities today. Often they are run on a co-operative basis and have proved to be very satisfactory. In some communities Mennonites have joined these co-operative organizations. In other places the feeling is strong that membership in co-operatives is a violation of Mennonite teaching against the unequal yoke. Still others feel that the co-operative principle is wrong in itself. Some of the opposition to co-operatives stems from the prejudiced propaganda of selfish interests who fear the competition of a superior form of business enterprize. The truth would seem to be, however, that there are both desirable and undesirable co-operatives, and that the question of which class a particular co-operative falls into depends primarily on the people who are members of it and who control it. A co-operative of the type operated by the Mennonites of Denbigh, Virginia, (Colony Farms Co-operative Dairy) would seem to be the most nearly ideal. In some communities, however, there may already be a successfully operating co-operative to which Mennonite farmers could sell their products in much the same way they dispose of any agricultural surplus. It probably would be undesirable to form a purely Mennonite co-operative in the presence of an organization of this kind. It certainly would be most unwise to establish a competing Mennonite industry organized on a capitalistic base. A careful survey will be required here as elsewhere.

Certain services are also needed in the average Mennonite community. For example, accountants are needed for various purposes such as helping farmers and small businesses set up their books and prepare their annual statements and income tax returns. This type of activity has become increasingly complex in recent years, and there is little likelihood that it will become simpler in the near future. Why should farm boys who have studied accounting in college, and who prefer it as a life work to returning to the farm, go to the city to find employment for their talents, when at the same time farmers who need their services must go to the city to secure them? The rural community could be strengthened if such men were encouraged to open small offices within the community. There is also a large place in the Mennonite community for the services of teachers, doctors, and nurses. The presence of these people in a community will not only help serve the community in a material way but will also enrich the lives of the community in a spiritual and intellectual way as well. A careful study would doubtless reveal numerous additional opportunities for services that might easily be rendered by members of the rural community.

A Mennonite community might be complete if it contained only industries which process agricultural products and services which cater only to the other members of the immediate community. It would seem desirable in most cases, however, to establish certain industries which will serve largely the outside market. Although the first two named may be considered roughly as meeting the needs of the unskilled worker and the white collar worker, it would probably be well to have certain small industries which afford employment for the skilled worker. High class work in printing or engraving would be one example of this type of industry; the making of fine quilts is another. In some cases, such work can be done largely during the long winter months when farm work is at a minimum. It should be noted, however, that such industries would likely be extremely sensitive to fluctuations in general business activity. They should, therefore, be scrutinized carefully before large investments are made in them.

Finally, adequate retail outlets to meet the normal needs of the community should be provided within the community itself. The possibilities of operating these stores on a co-operative basis should be explored very fully. Care should be taken, however, that a com-

mon (and not entirely unfounded) objection to co-operatives is avoided: that of paying inadequate salaries to the co-operative's management. With the financial control in the hands of farmers who may tend to be somewhat condescending toward men who hold "soft, indoor" jobs, the temptation to pay inadequate salaries to the management and workers in rural co-operatives may be strong. It should be clearly recognized that management of successful co-operative ventures requires skill and intelligence of a high type and the compensation should be correspondingly high.

In order that the total problem of the Mennonite community be unobscured by this lengthy, and at points abstract, economic reasoning, let it be emphasized in conclusion as it was emphasized at the outset, that economic factors are only part of the factors which make for successful Mennonite community life. Although it is probable that successful community life can not be established in the long run without an adequate economic base, it is *certain* that a permanently successful program cannot be established without an adequate spiritual base. Ideally the two should go together, with the economic a mere handmaiden for the spiritual. It is hoped that the present paper is a contribution toward that effort.

THE RELIGIOUS, EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL PROGRAM OF THE MENNONITE COMMUNITY OF TOMORROW

PAUL MININGER

The need for planning a program for the Mennonite community of tomorrow should be evident to everyone who has heard the addresses which have already been delivered at this conference. If a program is to be really adequate it must be guided at every point by the conception of the church which has been a part of the Anabaptist-Mennonite heritage, and must be sufficiently vital to offset the powerful forces that are making serious inroads upon the church today. Those who are planning this program must also be willing to think outside of the stereotype practices of the past, and include in the program all the activities and experiences that will enrich and strengthen Christian fellowship, or that will offset the forces that threaten Christian fellowship. This paper will attempt merely to suggest some of the main activities that should be found in the program of the Mennonite community of tomorrow if its religious, educational and social needs are to be met. The details of the activities together with specific plans for their administration must be left to some other time.

In evaluating and criticizing the suggestions given, the following questions should be kept in mind: 1. Will this activity enrich and strengthen Christian fellowship? 2. Should it be provided by the Mennonite community?

WORSHIP

One of the most important functions that should be provided for the members of the Mennonite community is corporate worship. It is in worship that man listens to the voice of God, and responds to that voice in adoration, thanksgiving, confession, and surrender. In corporate worship the members of the entire Christian fellowship unite in the expression of their common faith. Together they respond to the Word of God, receive His grace, and declare their devotion to His purposes. This experience of corporate worship not only develops a lively awareness of God, and awakens an insight into His will, but it creates fellowship and empowers for holy living those who sincerely participate in it.

The program of the Mennonite community of tomorrow should provide two worship services each Sunday, one in the forenoon and one in the evening. Each service should be complete, including a sermon. The morning service should be planned for all persons of the community, and the evening service should provide for all except the smaller children. If these services are to provide real worship experiences they should continue to be simple and free but should be improved and enriched by more careful planning. The sermon, in which the Word of God is expounded, should continue to have a central place in the service. Congregational singing, reading the Scriptures, praying, and giving should be considered a part of the service of worship.

The program of the future should also encourage family worship in the homes of the community and thus bring God into vital touch with the life needs of all members of the family. Personal worship and private devotions must continue to be encouraged as a part of the experience of all members if they are to maintain a wholesome and balanced life in the strenuous days that are ahead.

Pastoral Service

Although the Mennonite minister in the past has usually been primarily a preacher and the leader of the assembly as it met for public worship, he has also rendered certain pastoral services to the individuals and families of the community. These services should be continued and increased. The minister in the Mennonite community of tomorrow will not be able to meet all of the spiritual needs of his people by preaching from the pulpit. Much of his work will need to be done by personal ministry to the members of the church.

In the past the minister was expected to serve his people at times of spiritual crisis, such as sickness or death in the family. With the increasing complexity of modern life the number of spiritual crises in the experience of normal persons has also greatly increased. The minister therefore must be ready to furnish spiritual guidance and counsel to his people at all times when decisions are to be made that have moral and spiritual consequences. In order to serve them most effectively he must maintain such a relationship with his people that he can discover their spiritual needs before a crisis develops, and be of assistance to them at that time. Furthermore if a high level of moral and spiritual life is to be maintained it will be

necessary not only to discipline the erring as we have done in the past, but also to minister to the weak members and help them to a higher level of Christian achievement. This will require the personal services of the pastor.

Christian Action: Evangelism

The church exists in part to minister to the needs of its own members but it also has the responsibility to plan a program of Christian action in which the Gospel is taken to non-Christian people. New members should be brought into the church, and the borders of the kingdom should be further extended by establishing new churches in unchurched communities. This type of Christian action is called evangelism. In the past the evangelistic efforts of many Mennonite churches have been focused upon the children of the families of the church. This is indeed a fruitful field for evangelism, and efforts to bring our own children into the church must be improved and continued. Our children must be brought to such an understanding of the Gospel and to such an appreciation of the church that as they approach the important years of accountability they will make intelligent decisions for Christ and the church. Parents, Sunday-school teachers, and ministers must co-operate in this task.

Another evangelistic field which the church should exploit is the children of nonchurched families in the neighborhood of the church. By bringing them under the influence of the church in their early years, recruiting them in their early teens and having them share in the life of the community during youth, many of them should become useful members of the church. Not only children, but all unchurched or non-Christian persons in the neighborhood should be considered as a part of the evangelistic responsibility of the church. They should be reached by the church through literature, pastoral visitation, personal witnessing by Christian neighbors, and attendance at evangelistic meetings of the church.

Each congregation should also seek to extend its witness by bringing the Gospel to non-Christians and unchurched in other communities nearby. This can be done by distributing literature, personal visitation and witnessing, as well as by the establishment of Sunday schools and summer Bible schools, and conducting evangelistic meetings. The purpose should be the establishment of another

congregation wherever possible. The evangelistic program of a Mennonite community should also provide opportunity for its members to participate in the program of the church for world wide evangelism. This can be done by sending out missionaries to various parts of the world and contributing financially to the world wide missionary program of the church.

Christian Action: Service

A program of Christian action includes not only the presentation of the Gospel through preaching, teaching and literature, but also the living demonstration of the Christian message by acts of loving service within the Christian fellowship, and service to those outside of the Christian fellowship, all of such service being rendered *in the name of Christ.* This program of Christian service should include, first of all, various forms of mutual aid among the members of the Mennonite community. Plans for financial assistance at times of unexpected emergencies such as sickness, death, accident, or losses by fire and storm, are illustrations of the type of situation in which the spirit of Christian burden bearing could be demonstrated. The community ownership of such things as hospital beds, baby beds, crutches, and sick room supplies is another way in which the Christian community could serve its members. In some of the larger communities a church controlled hospital would make possible not only a service to the Mennonites of the community, but also a service and a witness to the non-Christian people of the surrounding communities.

In the past the Mennonite Church has felt a responsibility to care for its own poor, orphans, and aged who were unable to care for themselves. With the coming of social security legislation, and the provisions by the state for old age pensions, the question will face the church tomorrow as to whether its members should receive this assistance. Regardless of the final decision on this question, the Christian community will have lost something fine in its experience of fellowship when paying taxes and receiving social security checks becomes a substitute for Christian helpfulness and service for one's brethren.

There are usually numbers of people within a short distance of every community, who are poor and needy, and who are looked down upon by other groups because they have never learned to be-

come self-supporting. These people often need material assistance which could be furnished by women's sewing circles or other organizations from the church. Devout Christian women who are also trained as social workers might be engaged by the church to carry on a spiritual and a social ministry to these poor people, in the name of Christ and on behalf of the church. This would be missionary work combining the Christian message with works of mercy and love. Such a service would not only give an important witness but would also help to prevent the development of a narrow exclusiveness among the members of the church. This spirit of Christian service should also express itself by giving the members an opportunity to contribute financially to the emergency relief needs of famine and war stricken people in all parts of the world. If possible, this relief should be administered in the name of Christ and the church. It would also improve the effectiveness of the witness if each local community could have representatives who have participated in giving emergency relief to people in the far corners of the earth.

Christian Education

The Sunday school will doubtless continue to be the one opportunity for giving religious instruction to all persons in the community. In planning the program for the future more attention should be given to providing a variety of learning experiences which are related to the needs and abilities of the pupils, rather than forcing all persons to study the same lesson because of certain supposed benefits that come from uniformity.

The summer Bible school which is held each forenoon for two or three weeks in the summer months has proved itself a real asset to the churches which have them. Classes should be provided for all persons, from those of kindergarten age through the high school group. Sunday evening group meetings should be held at the church for junior children, young people and adults. These meetings should be designed primarily for the discussion of life problems and the application of Christian principles to life today rather than being merely another period for instruction and indoctrination. There should also be pre-baptismal and post-baptismal courses for children, young people, and adults who have professed faith in Christ for the first time. These classes should be taught by the

minister, and should be carefully planned so that membership in the Christian community becomes a meaningful experience. Other types of activities for children include junior choruses, summer camps, and service or missionary projects.

Some attention should be given by the young people and adults to the systematic study of courses which will prepare them for leadership in the work of the church. The curriculum outlined in the Christian Workers Training program is designed for this purpose and should be found helpful. Courses are included in the following areas: Bible, Christian education, Christian doctrine, missions and evangelism, church history, and church music. These courses may be studied in classes that meet one evening each week, from three to six months, or they may be studied in classes which meet each evening for one or two weeks during the winter months.

The curriculum of religious education to be followed in the future should be planned with the needs of the Mennonite community in mind. It will need to be planned by those who are a part of the larger Mennonite community and should provide all the necessary guidance to the local teachers and leaders so that it can be made to work even with limited equipment and personnel. Careful attention should be given to the coordination of the curriculums in the various teaching agencies, so that there will neither be unnecessary overlapping nor an omission of important teachings.

Bible conferences, missionary conferences, young people's conferences, and Christian life conferences which are conducted each evening for a week, or over a week end, may be a powerful influence in instructing the members of the church, and inspiring them to new decisions and reconsecrations. Participation in the evangelistic service and educational programs of the church will also contribute to the religious development of young people and adults.

There should be some opportunity for young people and adults to share in the larger fellowship of the church by attending and participating in general church or young people's conferences. This will help to broaden their sympathies and strengthen their loyalty to the church. An important contribution can be made to the religious and character development of all persons in the community by providing wholesome reading materials. There should be a library with a wide variety of good religious books that are adapted to the various age and interest groups in the church.

General Cultural Education

One of the major tasks of any community is the education of the young in the understandings, attitudes, and skills that are necessary for the responsibilities of adult life, and thus assure the continuance of the community, together with its ideals and way of life. In our country the states have passed laws making attendance at school compulsory during certain years of childhood and youth. They have also assumed responsibility for providing educational opportunities for their boys and girls at public expense. Most American communities have taken seriously their educational responsibility, and today our school system with its trained teachers, well equipped buildings, and carefully planned curriculum, is something of which most citizens are proud.

Having expressed appreciation for the excellent educational program which the state provides, it is necessary, however, to say also that the separation of the church and the state in America makes it impossible for the state to provide religious influences as a part of the educational program. The result is that our boys and girls receive an education which, although presumably neutral in matters of religion, as a matter of fact turns out to be favorable to a non-religious or irreligious way of life. This is not meant to speak disparagingly of the persons who are administering our public educational institutions. Many of them are devout Christians and their personal influence in the classroom is often a wholesome religious influence. On the other hand those who are planning for the Mennonite community of tomorrow must remember that the primary purpose of public education is to produce citizens for the state, not citizens for the kingdom of God or members of the church.

The influence of public education needs to be given special attention by the Mennonite community because some of its ideals and practices, which are also a part and parcel of its faith, run counter to the accepted standards of the state and the larger society. In view of this situation, it is the opinion of the writer that if the Mennonite community is to survive and preserve anything significant in the world of tomorrow, it must provide a first class Christian and Mennonite education for its children and youth. This suggestion is likely to bring the charge of narrowness and bigotry, and one can anticipate the fears of some that it is undemocratic, and that it will produce "hot-house" personalities which cannot exist in a harsh

world. These charges and fears must be given consideration. However a careful investigation of educational and sociological principles will reveal, I believe, that the production of the kind of a person and the kind of a church community which we visualize cannot be achieved unless the community controls the formal education of its young at least during childhood and early adolescence.

One can delineate only the general outlines of such a program of education. Most communities should have at least the first nine grades of school which would include what is commonly known as the junior high school. The larger communities should also have a high school. In so far as possible the Mennonite schools should seek to follow the same high standards of educational procedure as are maintained by the public schools. The curriculum would be similar to the public schools in many respects but the instruction of pupils in the world of men and things would always be given against the background of the Christian faith and way of life as it is interpreted and applied by the Mennonite community. Some direct instruction in religious subjects should be given in the curriculum. Much, however, would be accomplished by indirect references to Christian assumption in non-religion courses.

In addition to the basic religious and moral convictions of the community which it will perpetuate the school should also cultivate an appreciation for the entire way of life which is lived in the community, and seek to conserve most of the young people for life in the community. In the past and at the present the most talented young people are often lost to the church. In the future they must be made to feel that it will be worthwhile for them to give their lives to the cultivation and perpetuation of the values which the community believes in; they must be shown the shallowness of the American ideal of success interpreted in terms of position, honor, and financial gain. In planning for the general education of the youth, some attention should also be given to the cultivation of interests and vocational training. Some of this might be accomplished within the framework of the Christian school. Some of it might be carried on in the community through providing project activities similar to those which are carried on by 4-H clubs and similar organizations.

A program of adult education should find a place somewhere in our planning. This might be carried on by teaching short courses

intensively or by having classes meet at longer intervals throughout the year. It should include occasional lectures on a variety of subjects of general interest to the community. Courses or lectures on subjects such as the following might find a place in this program: preparation for parenthood, child development, family health, nutrition, community hygiene, soil conservation, animal husbandry, etc.

Recreation

Although there may be differences among us as to the emphasis which should be given to recreation in our lives and the kinds of recreation in which we should participate, most persons in Mennonite communities participate in some recreational activity, if it is nothing more than getting down on the floor and romping with the children after supper in the evening. In the past, recreation has frequently been frowned upon by the church leaders, and today our church gives its witness against most forms of commercialized amusement. However, there has been some form of recreation in our communities in the past, and there will continue to be in the future. So far as young people are concerned, their recreation or leisure time activities have a tremendous effect upon their character. Character is the result of making voluntary choices—doing what one wants to do. It would seem therefore that the community should give some guidance to the young people by providing opportunities for them to engage in wholesome leisure time activities.

The main problems relating to recreation are probably two. Who should provide the recreation, and what types of recreation are wholesome and constructive? In answer to the first question it would seem that much of the recreation for the persons in the community should be provided by the home and should be participated in by all members of the family. Each member of the community should also cultivate certain skills or interests which he can engage in alone during his leisure time; he should not need to depend entirely upon the presence of others for satisfaction in recreation. There are certain types of recreation which can be shared wholesomely by members of the same interest or age group. This means that recreational activities should be provided by the community for children's groups, young people's groups, and adult groups. There are certain occasions also when the entire church community could profitably meet together for fellowship and recreation.

Before the question can be answered as to what recreational activities are wholesome, much more careful study will need to be made. Since there are so many unwholesome activities engaged in by people of the world it will be difficult to admit into our communities only those which are constructive and wholesome. It is the conviction of the writer that if the community provides opportunities for its members to participate creatively in worthwhile service and educational activities, and if these activities are properly motivated and directed there will be less need for purely recreational activities. A satisfactory solution to the problem, however, does not lie in the direction of keeping out all forms of recreation, but rather in furnishing guidance in selecting the forms of recreation and in supervising the group recreation in the community. The following are merely suggestive of the types of recreation that might find a place in the community: musical activities, hobbies of various kinds, reading, hiking, picnics, gatherings for visiting and fellowship, etc.

Buildings

In order to carry on adequately the program outlined above, it will be necessary to have other community buildings in addition to the meeting house which is used exclusively for worship. The church has some precedents for the provision of buildings essential to church community activities. In the early years when our forefathers settled in eastern Pennsylvania, after building homes for themselves, they would very soon erect a meeting house for worship, and a small school building in which to educate their children. In a few Mennonite communities today, a special building is provided for the activities of young people's groups. It is rumored that other communities are considering the use of such buildings.

An adequate place of worship is, of course, one of the first needs of the church of tomorrow. It should be simple, beautiful, and comfortable, designed to be a place of worship, and not merely a building to seat a crowd of people. A building to house the Christian school will also be necessary. It should be separate from the house of worship, but easily accessible to it. There should be an assembly room in this building large enough to provide seating for the entire community. This room could then be used by any community group for purposes other than worship. The Sunday school and other religious education functions could meet either in the Christian

school building, or in rooms provided in the church for religious educational purposes. These buildings should serve as the center of the community life, and should be available to serve the entire community or groups within the community at any time.

Organization

This paper thus far has indicated only the general types of activities that should be found in the Mennonite community of tomorrow, and very little has been said about how the community should be organized to provide these activities to its members. No attempt will be made to present a blue print of the organization, but a few major principles will be stated and a few of the major problems pointed up. The basic social group in the Mennonite community today is the family, and it must continue to be so. The family, however, is being threatened and it must be protected and strengthened in planning a program for tomorrow. Any community program of organization or action that threatens the family is also a threat to the life of the community and should be carefully avoided. All activities should contribute to the strengthening and enrichment of family relations. Another organization in the Christian community is the congregation functioning for the purposes of worship, edification, and witnessing. The purpose of this organization is spiritual, and it is administered by a minister ordained by the congregation. It is this organization which has commonly been known as the church. In the development of other functions and other organizations in the Christian community this spiritual purpose must ever be protected and must be carried out at any cost.

These same people who are organized as a congregation for worship, edification and witnessing, however, are also members of society and they need to carry on the same social and economic functions as do the members of any other community. The difference between the Christian community and others is that the Christian community is guided by a faith and a way of life that is based upon the Bible. It is also constantly developing new and better ways of achieving this way of life in the non-Christian civilization of today. If the members of the Christian community find that organizing themselves for economic or social purposes will make it possible for them to carry out the Christian way of life more completely, it is not only legitimate for them to do so, but it is their duty to do so. The persons in the

Christian community may therefore organize themselves to carry out other functions besides worship, edification, and witnessing. If this position is accepted it follows that the members of the Christian community might organize themselves for economic, education, and recreation activities. Such a step should not be interpreted as a movement toward the secularization of the church, but rather as a method that will enable the members of the church to more fully achieve the Christian ideal. This distinction between the church as an organization for purposes of worship, edification and witnessing, and the community of Christian persons organized to perform certain social functions, may, in the minds of some, be unwarranted. However, it seems necessary in order to make clear the relationship between the social and spiritual functions of the Christian community.

Another grouping that must be recognized is the neighborhood. It consists of those persons who live within a certain geographical area. In some places the Mennonite community and the neighborhood are practically identical. In others they are not. In either case the problem arises as to what extent the persons who are not members of the local Mennonite church should participate in the community organizations.

Since the Christian community is a fellowship of persons who have the same faith, and are committed to the same way of living, only those who are members of the church should share in the administration of its activities. However, the church through its organizations may serve other persons in the neighborhood, and should do so wherever there is opportunity. In order to maintain the standards of the Christian community it would seem necessary to limit membership to those who have the same faith and ideals. There should also be organizations within the Christian community made up of persons who have similar interests. These groups will probably wish to engage in activities and projects of their own, and there is good reason why they should. Such organizations will not only be valuable devices for getting certain things done, but they will also have a wholesome influence upon those who fellowship together in them. There might well be organizations for the following groups: Boys, girls, boys and girls, young men, young women, young men and women, young adults, men, women. The activities which should be carried on by these organizations and those which should be pro-

vided for the entire community, would need to be carefully worked out and distributed. In general, however, it would seem that these organizations should carry on the less formal type of activities, such as service projects, evangelistic efforts, vocational projects, meetings for the discussion of life problems, recreational and fellowship activities. The more formal functions of worship and instruction should be provided by and for the entire community.

In the past there has often been much hesitancy on the part of the church to permit the organization of other groups within the community. This may have been due to a fear that smaller interest groups would develop loyalties in its members that would threaten their loyalty to the church. This danger is a real one, and must be guarded against. However, the presence of this danger is no reason for preventing the organization of any other groups within the community. It merely suggests the ever present problem of providing those activities which will meet the needs of each person, and enrich and strengthen his total experience, and at the same time strengthen the cords which bind the members of the community into a genuine Christian fellowship.

Finances

In order to finance the program outlined above it will require the outlay of more money than our communities have been accustomed to paying for the work of the church in the past. However, the Christian attitude toward wealth is that man is merely a steward, who is responsible for using it to promote the interests of God who is the true owner. Therefore, giving money becomes in reality one of the important aspects of the community activity, and it is not to be considered as a 'necessary evil' means to more important ends.

It has been proved many times that the church is willing to finance any project which it really believes to be important. It would therefore be necessary for the majority of the persons in a community to believe in the value of these activities before they could be expected to finance them. It would then seem to be desirable to have a unified budget, which would include all the expenses of the various projects and activities of the local community, as well as the causes in the general church program which would be supported by the local churches. Much of the money for this budget could be raised by free will offerings. Money for certain items in the budget

might better be raised by a system of taxation upon the families or wage earners of the community, rather than by free will offerings. Some arrangement should also be made so that local communities which might not be able to raise all the money for their own programs could be aided from a general fund created by the church at large. In any case, systematic giving, in proportion to one's ability, would need to be taught and practiced more generally than it has been in the past.

Leadership

Doubtless the most crucial problem in initiating and carrying through any kind of activity in the Christian community is that of furnishings a leadership which will maintain the objectives for which the church exists, and which will also have sufficient ability and skill to achieve those objectives in a practical situation. In the past, leadership in many community activities has largely been provided by the ordained ministers. The effectiveness of the community program was therefore dependent upon his vision and ability. At times some activities which were initated by laymen were prevented from being developed, because of a lack of vision on the part of ministers. Other church activities were promoted by laymen, and finally gained entrance into the community in spite of opposition by some ministers. The Sunday school is an illustration of this type of community project.

In the program for the Mennonite community of the future the minister must be first of all the spiritual leader of the community. He must lead in planning and administering the program of worship, edification, and witnessing. In actually carrying out the details of the program there will be need for many lay members. In the social, economic and educational activities of the community the minister will need to furnish vision, inspiration, and guidance, but much of the work of planning and administering can and should be done by laymen. There is not sufficient time for the minister to carry on all of these activities, and in many cases lay persons can do them better than the ministers. Young people today should be challenged with the task of preparing themselves for working as ministers and lay workers in the Christian church community of tomorrow.

Conclusion

The program suggested above grows out of the basic conviction that the entire experience of every Christian must be brought under the rule of God and into captivity by Christ. This is not to be interpreted in the narrow sense of God merely permitting man to do certain things, and not permitting him to do other things; although that is certainly a part of it. Rather is it to be understood that God enters into and enriches the whole of human experience, making all of life sacred, and making it possible for man to live the abundant life for which God has created him. Furthermore, since it is our faith that this fullness of life can only be achieved in the fellowship of the Christian community, it is the responsibility of that community to furnish *all* the activities and experiences that may be necessary to bring into existence and implement that way of life among its members and through them to bring it to the rest of the world.

To all who share these basic convictions is committed the task of using all of the insights from our rich heritage of the past in planning the program for the church community in the future. To it we must bring our best intelligence and skills together with a whole hearted devotion to Christ, and a humble dependence upon the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

UTILIZING OUR RESOURCES FOR THE BUILDING OF THE CHURCH AND THE COMMUNITY

J. D. Graber

"Take heed now; for the Lord hath chosen thee to build an house . . . be strong and do it." I Chron. 28:10.

I am happy for the implication of the subject that stresses building rather than merely holding our own. I am convinced that even as in war the best defense is offense, so the best way to preserve values in a church is to use and exploit them. The text is from the speech of David when he turned over the building of the temple to his son Solomon. This is symbolic of the experience of each of us. Character is not built in a single generation, and each parent, in a sense, turns over an unfinished "temple" to his son or daughter. More accurately still, the Church builds the temple of her testimony from generation to generation; it will always remain an unfinished task which we eventually leave for others to complete who follow us.

We have fallen heir to a definite religious and cultural heritage. It is what we call, "The Faith of Our Fathers" or "The Mennonite Way of Life," and it represents a precious heritage. This inheritance, as Goethe said, "We seek to earn," to be worthy of, and then to build on it and with it. In a certain specific sense we seek to advance beyond those of our previous generation, while those coming after us will, we hope, advance beyond us. Only thus can a living heritage remain living.

In seeking to build with our resources we are faced first of all with a question of dynamic; the resources of the church must be made *available*. The illustration of the vitamin is apt at this point. Minerals and other elements in chemically pure form are of little use to the body until the mysterious alchemy of the vitamin makes them available for body building. Popularly speaking these elements must be present in living form.

The chief problem of the Church is that of spiritual vitality. This problem is fundamental to any economic or social considerations. It is only when the miracle of regeneration takes place within an individual, when he is born again, when he becomes *alive* in Christ

Jesus, that the base metal of his resources is mysteriously but very practically made available for the building of church and community.

This is the point of greatest emphasis in my address this evening. The Church is no mere social service institution. She is the body of Christ. No common fellowship of uncommon people, but an uncommon fellowship of common people. The Church is a living organism, and as such releases powers that are greater than the mere sum total of all the powers of the individual members. The laws at work in her are not *merely* those of psychology, sociology, and economics. These are at work, but, more significantly, there is here at work a fundamental spiritual law. It is none other than the function of the living Spirit of God—the Holy Spirit in His cleansing, purifying, transforming, and life-giving capacity.

Activism is not synonymous with spiritual vitality. The conservative pre-war theologians of Europe, as they looked at the terrific social emphasis of the American church, began to refer to activism as the great American heresy. Our continual concern with programs of service and activity are not *necessarily* right and good. We forget sometimes how much we are creatures of the time in which we live. The mechanical civilization in the midst of which we live, and the scientific point of view that has produced and fostered it, are not necessarily unmixed blessings. Nor are they the ultimates we are prone to consider them.

A man recently expressed this viewpoint naively when he asked, "Why was the Gospel not put up in the form of graphs, charts, and in a numbered series of catalogued facts"? The answer is simply that the Gospel would then cease to be universal and timeless, and would become a scientific instrument adapted to our own age. We should not forget that our "scientific attitude" is the handicap placed on us by the age in which we are living. When the depressed classes of India revolted against Hinduism a few years ago it is instructive to note that the propaganda literature used to stir up the mind of the inert masses was written in *poetry*. A Western missionary cannot understand the psychology of such an approach.

No, the Church is the living body of Christ and her chief function is to foster faith and worship, the fruits of which are love and purity of life. Upon this background it is now pertinent to inquire what are our resources, as a Mennonite Church, which this vitamin of divine life within is to release and make available for church and community building. Let us look at three of them in turn.

1. Economic Resources

The Mennonite Church is rich. We do not have many who are extremely rich, but our average per capita wealth must rank high in the world's averages. God has blessed our church and has, historically, often made good the promise that if we "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, all these *things* will be added unto us." Our faith and practice, furthermore, have given us the characteristics that made for economic advancement. Mennonites have always been traditionally honest, thrifty, and industrious. These are Christian qualities. It is not so much a question of how much we have, but our attitude toward that which we do have that is the chief concern. Are our goods *ours?* Or are we in reality *trustees?* If we would build church and community in line with the visions put forward in this Conference, we must learn to give largely and self-sacrificially. Nothing less than the tithe will suffice. It is generally conceded in many churches that if twenty per cent of the members tithe all the financial problems of the congregation are solved. This is really a serious indictment. It means that in the realm of giving our churches are not more than twenty per cent efficient. If the economic resources of the Mennonite Church should be properly, and I say Scripturally, released, our church boards and agencies would be embarrassed in trying to make programs and find activities to spend it effectively.

Especially must the Church's wartime income be redeemed by heavy giving. This added income because of the war, and it is large, is blood money. A mere tenth is not sufficient to redeem and purify it.

2. Personal Resources

The Church has not at all realized full value from its "youth potential." Only a small fraction of the thousands of young people in the Church are efficiently at work anywhere within the Church's program. This is a serious situation; for where there is no spiritual exercise there can be no spiritual growth. So little of the great task of the Church is being done, so much left undone, because of "manpower shortage." And still more seriously, the Scriptures teach us that *not* to have done that which ought to have been done is sin, bringing upon itself in the great and final judgment, the sentence: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

What may be the causes of this failure to release the "work potential" of the Church's young people? It may be plain spiritual lethargy. Where spiritual life is at a low ebb there can not possibly be any witness or self-sacrificing service. The cause may be with the ministry. Young people desire to work, but they cannot be expected to make the program. The leadership must point out the opportunities, must make opportunities for young people. It is often easier to do the work of ten than to put ten men effectively to work. The pastor's responsibility of making the program, pointing out and creating opportunities, and directing the work of the young people in his church, is a heavy task, but a very rewarding one.

There are two suggestions I should like to offer whereby some of this "personal potential" in the Church could be released and utilized. First of all, *a mission outpost* for every local congregation. Besides saving souls, proclaiming the Gospel, and building new churches (all most desirable consequences) such activity in a local congregation would have salutary results such as these:

a. Many more people would be put to work in the program of the Church.

b. Talent is discovered by the person himself and by others.

c. Talent is not only discovered; it is trained and developed.

d. It stimulates and strengthens the mother church. The spiritual reaction of this new interest and witness-outlet is healthy.

e. Such an outpost becomes the training ground for ministers, missionaries, and other church workers.

The second suggestion for the release of this "personal potential" in the Church would be, *Service Units*. A very healthy outlook is developing among the young people of our Church in that they are recognizing that they owe a debt to the Church. They have no moral right to accept this rich heritage unless they, in some sense, "earn" it. The principle is being more and more widely accepted that every young man and woman owes at least a year of service to the Church in some program or place where the Church may designate. It is on this principle that the Service Unit idea is growing up. Due to restrictions of Selective Service, it is difficult to carry out these plans very fully in the war years, but we visualize a large expansion of this type of service in future years.

With a minimum of organization, Bible Schools and evangelism in cities and rural areas could be carried on; disaster relief could be

given on the shortest of notice; and, with a continuity of leadership, many young people could be used in permanent service and evangelism projects carried on in any number of marginal communities. In this way many young people of few talents could receive the spiritual blessing of being able to render a significant service to the Church, and thus there would be released large resources from the Church's reservoir of youth.

3. Spiritual Resources

The chief wealth of the Church is her spiritual heritage, "the riches of glory in Christ Jesus." We need to emphasize this again at the end of a two-day program that has given much attention to the economic and social resources of the Church. We must remember that ownership of land, a simple rural culture, and desirable population curves are merely incidental and secondary. You can have a prosperous and thriving social life in a community, but the Church in that community may be spiritually dead. We may have all the material advantages and yet fall short in what Dr. Baker this morning called, "personality development." Let us remember that in personality development the religious and moral are the most uniquely personal elements.

Our Church has a rich spiritual heritage. What are the elements of this resource that we find ourselves heirs to again in this generation? We have not merely a list of doctrines and practices that are different or peculiar, but we have a rich evangelical heritage—a faith that is sound on the great doctrines of man, sin, the atonement, the person of Christ, and the authority of God's Word. We have in addition, a healthy emphasis on Christian experience.

The Sense of Mission

We have now with this rich spiritual heritage a growing conviction for evangelism. God has kept us these four hundred years for a purpose. Small denominations are probably kept by God's providence for the purpose of keeping alive neglected truth. Everywhere I see and feel a new sense of mission taking hold of leadership and laity in our Church. We have lain dormant long enough as a denomination; we must arise now and press upon a wounded and disillusioned world the claims of vital Christian faith.

What is the unique contribution which our particular church can make to the total impact of the Christian witness in our day? A few years ago a number of us on board ship were asked to answer in one sentence this question as it applies to the Mennonite Church. We finally came to this reply: "Keeping alive in a sophisticated world the simple God-fearing way of life." This statement can be criticized and it is but a partial picture, but, in addition to the cardinal doctrines and principles shared by all true Christendom, it may be that this particular expression of the faith is the peculiar task of our Church.

I am stressing a program of Church and Community building that places first things first. Let us not think for a moment that we must *begin* on rural culture and think we can hold spiritual values in that. It may serve as a congenial environment, and must be preserved for that reason, but let us not forget that spiritual vitality, yes, spiritual survival, is not limited to any one earthen vessel. Urbanization is going on. We cannot stop it. We can, we must have Mennonite Churches in our cities. But since it is easier to maintain our simple God-fearing ways in a rural atmosphere, let us seek to preserve our rural communities and our rural culture.

Let us attack with vigor and with confidence the problem of urbanization. *Spiritual vitality is the secret.* There are already case studies available indicating that the Mennonite Church has not been able to maintain anything unique or vital under the pressure of an urban culture. Our church will have no valid reason for existence unless we shall be able to continue to foster the keeping of spiritual values, and to *release* spiritual vigor in the new cultural environment. Our uniqueness as a church lies not in forms or in cultural patterns, but in the quality of faith and life that has produced these patterns in past generations, and will continue to produce uniquely *Christian* patterns in the environments of tomorrow. Our chief resources are spiritual. Let us build the Church and the community on these.